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THE SOVIET NAVAL INFANTRY

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

J. J. CARROLL, MAJ, USMC
B.A., Iona College, 1962

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

Except for participation in World War II when naval infantry units were formed to assist in the protection of the strategic flanks of the Red Army, naval infantry had not been part of the Soviet military force structure until 24 July 1964. On that date a 3,000 man naval infantry force was created. During the past 13 years, this force has grown to a five-regiment, 14,500 man force supported by modern amphibious shipping and associated hardware. Activation and maturation of this force coincided with the rapid expansion and increased capabilities of the Soviet Navy. During the past 15 years, the Soviet Navy has developed a global reach and is now capable of supporting military, economic, and political objectives far from the shores of the Soviet Union. What is the connection between the new blue-water Soviet Navy and her naval infantry force? What missions have been assigned to Soviet naval infantry in view of the new dimensions of the Soviet Navy?

As this study demonstrates, global interests of the Soviet Union resulted in the requirement for a permanent naval infantry force. These interests include assured access to sea lines of communication, protection of support facilities for the strategic naval submarine fleet, and fully integrated options for wartime military contingencies in the European and Sino-Soviet theaters of operation. The study concludes that the present naval infantry force structure is designed to accomplish the following missions:

1. In the event of war, protect the strategic flanks of the Soviet Army.

2. Insure continued access to sea lines of communication protecting those choke points critical to Soviet maritime activity and in the event of war, seize those objectives necessary for access to the world's oceans.

3. Protect support facilities for the strategic naval submarine fleet.

The study indicates that although the Soviet Navy has undertaken global operations and has established a permanent presence in areas of traditional Western supremacy, the current naval infantry force is neither structured nor equipped to provide sufficient forces for the defense of new Soviet advanced naval bases. Significant upgrading of naval infantry would be required if Soviet leaders decide to task naval infantry with global responsibilities. Nevertheless, present assigned missions assure Soviet naval infantry a substantial, long-term role in Soviet military affairs. Soviet naval infantry is here to stay.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A Master's thesis, although the product of individual research, is seldom completed without additional assistance. One person has been particularly helpful in providing the necessary skill, knowledge, and professional expertise to ensure that the final product met the highest standards. Lieutenant Colonel Al Myer has been most responsible for assisting me in this sometime painful venture. No way exists for me to repay him for his laborious efforts. I can but say, "Sir, you are a true professional in every sense of the word, and I am a much better man because of our association." I sincerely thank you.

My wife, Sara, managed to live through the ordeal in the true Marine fashion. I knew she would because she's a very special person. Her support, confidence, and encouragement provided the incentive necessary to accomplish the mission. I thank her with all my heart.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> The flag of the Soviet Navy flies over the oceans of the world. Sooner or later the United States will have to understand it no longer has mastery of the seas.
>
> S. G. Gorshkov
> Admiral of the Fleet of the
> Soviet Union (30 July 1967)[1]

> Over the past decade the Soviet Navy has evolved into a force capable of making an offensive presence felt on a worldwide scale. In addition, it acts as a potent instrument of Soviet foreign policy in peacetime. Its capability to conduct coordinated operations on all the world's oceans was graphically demonstrated this spring in exercise OKEAN 75—the largest peacetime exercise ever conducted by any navy since the end of World War II.
>
> J. L. Holloway, III
> Admiral, U.S. Navy
> Chief of Naval Operations
> (April 1975)[2]

A Mature Soviet Navy. The realities of today's Soviet Navy are being felt in such disparate locations as Berbera, Somalia; Luanda, Angola; Socotra and Aden, South Yemen; Singapore; Malaysia; and Cienfuegos, Cuba. These realities are also being felt in the councils of NATO, on Capitol Hill, and wherever U.S. sailors gather to swap old salty tales. The Russian bear has learned to swim and he is now mastering the currents of the seven

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[1] Admiral Sergei G. Gorshkov, "Our Mighty Oceanic Fleet," Pravda, July 30, 1967.

[2] A message from the Chief of Naval Operations contained in "Understanding Soviet Naval Developments," NAVSO P3560, April 1975.

seas. And when he wants to rest, he need not return home. Either by use of an extensive array of replenishment ships or through arrangements for port facilities or anchorages with numerous countries, the Soviet Navy ranges far and has staying power. John Erickson, the noted British analyst, has recently concluded that the Soviet Navy controls the Norwegian Sea and as such, brings increasing pressure on NATO.[3] Closer to home, General George S. Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, makes the following observations in his military posture statement for FY 1978.[4]

> There is no question but that the capabilities of Soviet naval forces are growing. This is of real concern as we look to the future.

In addition to the surface fleet, the Soviet Union possesses the world's largest submarine force including the Delta II class nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine. This recent addition to the Soviet Union's strategic nuclear forces carries 16 SS-N-8 missiles with a proven range in excess of 5700 nautical miles.[5]

Yes, the realities are sobering. But perhaps even more startling is the nature of the change in the Soviet Navy. Just 15 years ago the Soviet Navy was but a mere appendage of the Soviet Armed Forces, largely limited to the contiguous, coastal fleet areas of the Soviet homeland.

In 1962 the United States controlled the high seas. This was vividly demonstrated in October 1962 when the U.S. Navy exercised her naval supremacy during the Cuban missile crisis. The Soviet Union was

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[3]John Erickson, "The Northern Theater: Soviet Capabilities and Concepts," Strategic Review, Summer, 1976, p. 10.

[4]General George S. Brown, USAF, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Military Posture for FY 78: January 20, 1977, p. 77.

[5]Fred S. Hoffman, Kansas City Star, 23 March 1977, p. 1.

forced to capitulate and the crisis was over in 13 days.

In the past fifteen years the Soviet research and development programs of the fifties and early sixties, coupled with the decision to undertake a dramatic shipbuilding program, have produced a modern first-class Navy of global dimensions.

Since the 1962 deployment of the world's first large all-gas turbine warship, the Soviet Union has put to sea ten new classes of surface warships and stayed abreast of, if not surpassed, the United States in the construction of surface combatants.[6] In the category of small combatants (missile gun, patrol, torpedo boats and minesweepers) the Soviet Union has significantly outdistanced her Western competitors. Soviet submarine capabilities have also shown a marked increase during the last fifteen years. The situation has radically changed since the early sixties, when the strategic missiles of the Soviet Golf and Hotel class submarines had a range of 1600 nautical miles.

The Soviet Navy launched nuclear powered submarines in 1967, and by 1973 possessed a new SLBM Delta class submarine equipped with a missile ranging in excess of 4000 nautical miles. Pioneering efforts in anti-ship cruise missile development have resulted in the construction and deployment of a large force of nuclear powered attack and cruise missile submarines.

A statistical comparison of Soviet and U.S. Fleets during the period 1962-1976 reveals the dynamic nature of the Soviet shipbuilding program.

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[6]Classes of surface warships include: Carrier aviation ships, Kiev and Moskva. Cruisers, Kresta I and II, Kara, Sverdlov (conventional), and Kashin. Destroyers, Krivak and Kanin (conventional). Ocean escorts, Mirka.

Chart 1

SOVIET - U.S. SURFACE FLEET COMPARISON 1962-1976[7]

	US		SOVIET	
Major Combatants	1962	1976	1962	1976
Aircraft Carriers	26	13	0	1(+2)
Helicopter Carriers	6	8	0	2
Cruisers	42	26	22	34
Frigates/Destroyers	382	137	165	80
Escorts	339	0	175	97
TOTALS	795	184	362	214
Minor Combatants/ Support Ships				
Patrol Craft	21	26	245	481
Amphibious Ships	240	58	120	100
Mine Warfare Ships	243	3	1,000	180
Auxiliaries	420	129	200	195
Motor Torpedo Boats	0	0	1,000	160
TOTALS	924	216	2,565	1,116

The foregoing chart clearly demonstrates the superiority of the United States Fleet in 1962. She was clearly dominant in major combatants and possessed a marked advantage in seaborne projection capability as well as unchallenged command of the sea. In comparison the Soviet surface fleet of 1962 was predominately equipped with a large number of minor combatants designed primarily for coastal defense. Her naval vessels possessed little ability for distant deployments and the majority of their amphibious shipping consisted of landing craft. The fleet inventory of 1962 clearly reflected that the primary mission of the Soviet Navy was the defense of the Soviet homeland. An analysis of the 1976 statistics quite obviously tells a different story. The U.S. and Soviet Fleets are about equal in numbers of major combatants while the Soviet Navy is significantly ahead

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[7] 1962 statistics derived from Janes' Fighting Ships 1962-63, ed. Raymond V. B. Blackman (New York: McGraw Hill Co., 1962), pp. 297 and 400. 1976 statistics derived from Military Balance 1976-1977 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1976), pp. 6-9.

in smaller combat craft. The construction of KIEV-class ships, ocean-going combatants and auxiliaries, and amphibious vessels definitely provides the Soviet Navy with improved projection and sea control capabilities. The Soviet Navy's growth in the past fifteen years has resulted in the attainment of completely new capabilities no longer restricting the fleet to the Soviet littorals.

Admiral Sergei Gorshkov's "go to sea" order of 1963 initiated a dramatic program of Soviet naval deployments.[8] Until the end of 1963, Soviet ships remained primarily in their major fleet operating bases in the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, Arctic Ocean, and Northwest Pacific Ocean.

By the middle of 1964, Soviet warships commenced a continual presence in the Mediterranean. During the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, Soviet warships steamed through the Turkish Straits until the Soviet Mediterranean "ESKADRA" numbered seventy ships. Since 1967, the Soviet Navy has maintained an average of thirty-five to forty ships in that sea. In fact, Soviet ship days in the Mediterranean have increased from 4,000 in 1965 to more than 15,000 in 1974.[9] The Soviet Union's ability to rapidly deploy her naval forces was again demonstrated in October 1973. The Mediterranean "ESKADRA" rapidly expanded to ninety-six ships during the Mideast Crisis while the U.S. Sixth Fleet's strength peaked at sixty. Additionally, the Soviet Union exhibited a responsive, modern, and effective military support system. Within two weeks after the outbreak of hostilities, Soviet naval and merchant shipping sealifted over 63,000 tons

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[8]Admiral Sergei G. Gorshkov, "Great Missions of the Soviet Navy," Krasnaia Zvezda, February 5, 1963.

[9]A ship day represents one day for one ship at sea out of a local exercise area. Accordingly, 15,000 ship days means an average of 45 ships every day of the year.

of war material to Syrian and Egyptian clients.[10]

Since 1969 Soviet naval presence has expanded well beyond the Mediterranean Sea. The Soviet Navy has extended their presence into the Indian Ocean and currently maintain a permanent presence off the west coast of Africa. Their ability to conduct protracted cruises expanded as Naval Task Forces deployed to the Caribbean and visited Cuba in 1969 and 1970. In the fall of 1971 a seven-ship task force crossed the Pacific to the Gulf of Alaska, turned south and after steaming within twenty-five miles of Hawaii, returned to Pacific ports.

This projection of Soviet naval power has proven to be a valuable political-military instrument. In March 1969 the Ghanaian Government released two impounded Soviet fishing craft after Soviet naval vessels steamed into adjacent waters in the Gulf of Guinea. In November 1970 a naval patrol was established off the coast of Guinea in the aftermath of the Portuguese attack on Conakry. The use of Soviet naval power to assist in the deployment of Cuban forces to Angola in 1975 dramatized the Soviet Union's improved sea power status. Behind the shield of a naval task force, Soviet aircraft and merchant shipping, aided by their Warsaw Pact allies, clearly demonstrated a combined capability for sustaining the MPLA forces during this intervention.[11]

Since 1964, the year Admiral Gorshkov described as "the year of the routine long cruise," Soviet vessels expanded the scope and number of foreign countries visited. Forty-five countries were visited between 1971 and 1973 as compared with sixteen during the period 1954-1964. Soviet

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[10]William P. Quandt, "Soviet Policy in October 1973 War," RAND Corporation Study, Santa Monica, California, May 1976, p. 23.

[11]Peter Vanneman, "Soviet Intervention in Angola: Intentions and Implications," Strategic Review, Summer, 1976, p. 95.

ship visits, including submarines, increased from sixty-four during the period 1953-1964 to 955 during the period 1971-1973. Admiral Gorshkov publicly claimed that during 1973 the Soviet ships had visited more foreign ports and more nations than United States ships.[12]

Coupled with the Soviet Navy's increased global presence, the Soviet Union has increased their program to acquire basing and port facility rights. In the past decade Soviet vessels have utilized port facilities in Iraq, Egypt, South Yemen, Syria, Yugoslavia, Algeria, and Angola; and have been actively involved in constructing fixed naval facilities in Somalia. Although basing rights have been both won and lost, the Soviet Union has continued an active search for new ports and for replacements for those lost.

Concomitant with the increase in projectability was the 1964 reactivation of the Soviet naval amphibious strike forces. This naval infantry force represents a marked increase in military capabilities. New construction programs producing modern ocean-going landing ships, helicopter cruisers, and the first of at least three 40,000-ton aircraft carriers, provide the means of giving Soviet naval infantry new projection capabilities. This prompted J. William Middendorf II, Secretary of the U.S. Navy, to conclude that:

> The new Soviet Navy has been adopting a shape more consistent with its new missions. The first Soviet VSTOL aircraft carrier is undergoing sea trials, work continues on a second carrier, and a third is apparently being readied for construction. The Soviets are also strengthening the Naval Infantry (Marine) forces.[13]

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[12]Anne Kelly, "Pattern of Port Visits," Summary of Proceedings on Soviet Naval Developments Seminar III, prepared by Ken Booth, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Department of Political Science, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 1974, p. 89.

[13]J. William Middendorf II, Secretary of the Navy, "American Maritime Strategy and Soviet Naval Expansion," Strategic Review, Winter, 1976, p. 20.

The "Soviet Navy of Today" is a navy of significantly increased capabilities, increased maritime experience. It is one which had demonstrated the capability to support military, economic and political goals.

Under the direction of Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, the man who has designed and directed the Soviet Navy for more than two decades, the Soviet Navy has become a modern force which maintains ships at sea on a global basis. In comparison to the U.S., the Soviet Navy possesses an equal number of modern surface combatants, a strong naval air arm, and an increased capability to project military force. While achieving larger and more distant deployments, Soviet warships are no longer strangers to many parts of the world. Soviet warships operating on the world oceans represent Soviet interest and influence. Their presence has obviously increased the political and military options of Soviet decision-makers while at the same time reducing or at least inhibiting those of the United States and her allies. Admiral Gorshkov appraises his Navy's capability as: "an ocean going fleet which can challenge the enemy in the open seas and coasts of the world."[14] And General George Brown, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, certainly appreciates his adversary's appraisal:

> Moreover, the changing Soviet naval force structure reflects an expansion from the conduct of peripheral area sea control to the conduct of more extensive sea denial operations over, on and under the sea. The KIEV class aircraft carrier, well equipped for anti-submarine warfare (ASW), capable of providing tactical air support to forward deployed Soviet naval vessels and submarines, and with a potent antiship capability in its missiles, adds an impressive dimension to Soviet naval power. New classes of underway replenishment ships, a new class landing ship (LSD/LPD) and new classes of fast turn around, roll-on/roll-off, float-on/float-off merchant ships, will allow more sustained freedom of movement by Soviet naval forces in distant areas. The current reality of the Soviet Navy is that it is growing as a global force.[15]

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[14] Soviet Naval Developments, Michael McGwire (ed.), (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 468.

[15] Brown, op. cit., p. 70.

The Naval Infantry Arm. The dynamic changes in the Soviet Navy, the impact of strategic capability and global reach have caught the imagination of Western analysts. Much effort has been expended in search of a clear understanding of the capabilities and intentions of this new force. But what of the infantry arm of the Soviet Navy? Yes, there is a sizable Soviet marine force—even though they have not been the subject of much Western analysis. They are an integral part of Admiral Gorshkov's naval power. They do offer additional options to the political leadership. This force provides the Soviet Union with a valuable politico-military capability and its importance is worthy of serious investigation. What missions have been assigned to Soviet naval infantry in view of the changing nature of the Soviet Navy? This is the focus of this study. The objective is to determine what missions have been assigned to the Soviet naval infantry in view of the changing nature of the Soviet Navy.

As a branch of the Soviet Navy, the Soviet naval infantry is presently deployed with the four major Soviet fleets. Within each fleet area Soviet naval infantry forces are organized in regiments (formerly referred to as brigades) and attached to each of these four fleets. The naval infantry consists of approximately 14,500 officers and men.[16] Periodically, as was the case during the 1973 Mideast Crisis, naval infantry units have been observed embarked in amphibious shipping and deployed to these crisis areas.

Soviet naval infantry is a part of the naval force structure and further clarification and amplification of their status can be provided by definition. The transliterated term "Morskaia Pekhota" is commonly

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[16]International Institute for Strategic Studies, Military Balance 1976-1977, London, p. 9.

translated in Western publications as "Naval Infantry." This is the literal translation. The Soviets themselves, however, translate the term in their English language publications as "Marines." Moreover, an article in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia entitled "Morskaia Pekhota" states that the term is generic, referring to the Royal Marines of Great Britain and to the U.S. Marine Corps as well as to the Soviet Marines.[17]

In the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union the "Morskaia Pekhota" is a special branch of the navy, organized and equipped for the purpose of conducting amphibious landings, holding captured beachheads from counter-attack, conducting prolonged river crossings, and defending naval bases. Additionally, Soviet Marines—regardless of their specialty

> . . . must be bold landing men, confident masters of firearms and cold steel, methods of self defense without arms, and demolition work, able to dive and swim with weapons and in uniform, to fight tanks, to orient themselves by terrain, to sail small craft and to drive a vehicle.[18]

An indication of the flexibility provided to the Soviet political leadership by the existence of Soviet naval infantry occurred in 1973. The naval infantry unit embarked in amphibious shipping of the Mediterranean "ESKADRA" was alerted for possible employment in the Middle East. This capability did not go unnoticed.[19] In the fall of 1976, General Louis H. Wilson, Commandant of the Marine Corps, expressed his concern about the increased offensive capability of the Soviet naval infantry:

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[17]Charles S. Pritchard, "Soviet Marines," To Use the Sea (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1973), p. 256.

[18]Colonel L. Noga, "Soviet Naval Infantry," Military Knowledge, January 1972, contained in N. Polmar, Soviet Naval Power, Challenge for the 70's (New York: Crane Russell & Co., 1972), p. 62.

[19]Quandt, op. cit., p. 33.

> As part of this maritime growth, the USSR appears to be developing an amphibious capability as well. And recent events in Angola have made it clear that the Soviet Union can exploit her newfound naval strength by becoming active in more remote areas than those which have interested her in the past.[20]

Methodology. Although dramatic change has characterized the past fifteen years of Soviet naval development, there also exists clear patterns of historical continuity. All leaders of the Russian landmass, Russian and Soviet alike, have been faced with similar problems. The geographical configuration of the Russian landmass has remained fairly constant. She has been a country continually hampered in her efforts to gain outlets to the sea. Her northern frontier presents a frozen barrier while the strategic choke points in the Baltic and Turkish Straits are certainly not new. The naval infantry has long been an element of Russian naval strategy. An investigation of the historical continuity should provide patterns which impact upon current naval infantry developments, deployments, and capabilities. This perspective is the subject of Chapter II. The remaining chapters focus on the Soviet period.

Research has been directed toward an investigation of primary sources. The following sources have been of particular importance:

1) Navies in War and Peace by Admiral of the Fleet, Sergei G. Gorshkov. This treatise contains a complete analysis of Soviet naval requirements as seen through the eyes of the prime architect of today's Soviet Navy. Admiral Gorshkov's published treatise is a series of eleven articles. The first article appeared in Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest) in February 1972 and the last article was published in February 1973.

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[20]General Louis H. Wilson, "A Flexible Military Posture," Strategic Review, Fall, 1976, p. 10.

The importance of Navies in War and Peace is attributable in part to its author. Admiral Gorshkov has held his position as Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy for over two decades. He is currently a full member of the CPSU Central Committee and a Deputy Minister of Defense. The series of eleven articles which totalled approximately 54,000 words represents not only an extensive but an authoritative and important statement. In this treatise Admiral Gorshkov discusses the roles, missions, and place of his navy in various historical eras, and the relationship between naval development and the foreign policy goals of the state. In essence, Admiral Gorshkov's treatise announces Soviet naval policy and clearly describes peacetime and wartime missions charged to the Soviet Fleet.

2) Military Strategy, General Vasilii D. Sokolovskiy, editor; was published first in 1962 and revised in subsequent editions in 1963 and 1968. This book is widely recognized as perhaps the most authoritative source on military strategy published by Soviet authorities in the past fifty years. Military Strategy appears to represent the findings of the group of Soviet officers that were tasked in 1960 to study the impact of the nuclear weapon upon warfare. As such it was particularly useful in understanding Soviet views of strategy and doctrine. I have used the 1968 edition which has been translated into English and indicates the additions and deletions of both the 1962 and 1963 versions.

3) Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament by Nikita S. Khrushchev translated by Mr. Strobe Talbott. This book is the concluding volume of former Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's oral memoirs. In it he presents his own views of his years at the head of the Soviet Government (1954-1964). During this period important incidents occurred and decisions were made which directly affected the status of the Soviet naval infantry.

An examination of the leader's memoirs provided an opportunity to investigate this critical period from both sides.

4) Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), the monthly theoretical journal of the Soviet Navy is published under the aegis of the Ministry of Defense. It is widely read and serves as the naval leadership's principal medium of mass communication. This naval digest, somewhat similar to its U.S. counterpart, Proceedings, is generally directed toward the professional military audience and contains information concerning naval doctrine, strategy, and naval development.

5) Additional Soviet journals investigated include:

**Military Herald, the monthly journal of the Soviet Ground Forces.

**Military Knowledge, the monthly journal of DOSAAF (Voluntary Organization for Assistance to the Army, Navy, and Air Force) which is an organization with a membership of at least thirty million people involved in military and paramilitary training programs.

**Soviet Military Review, a monthly journal published in English and Arabic and is intended for foreign audiences. Although this journal serves a specific propaganda function, it periodically reprints articles originally published in valuable Soviet periodicals.

6) Soviet Newspapers: Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), Pravda, and Izvestia. Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) is the official daily newspaper of the Ministry of Defense. It is the usual medium of communication from the Ministry of Defense to its forces in the field. Pravda is the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Izvestia of the Soviet Government. These sources were researched to obtain information regarding public announcements, articles on doctrine,

strategy or tactics, or accounts of the naval infantry's participation in Soviet and Warsaw Pact naval maneuvers.

Although many Soviet newspapers and journals are publicly available much of the information regarding military specifics such as equipment, size, organization, structure and dispositions is restricted. In order to obtain this information and data the following documents proved most useful.

1) Military Balance, published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

2) Jane's Fighting Ships, published by McGraw-Hill.

While every attempt was made to utilize primary sources, secondary sources have been used where information or translations were not available. Of particular interest and assistance were the following:

1) Soviet Naval Strategy, / Robert W. Herrick. This work is primarily a historical analysis of Soviet naval strategy predominately based on primary source data.

2) A series of seminars on Soviet Naval Developments conducted by the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Department of Political Science, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Participants in these seminars included the noted analysts of Soviet affairs, Graham Turbiville, Thomas Wolfe, and John Erickson. Seminar findings were published in book form, Soviet Naval Developments, Capability and Context and Soviet Naval Policy, Objectives and Constraints, edited by Michael McGwire. The results of these seminars in which some of the noted analysts of Soviet affairs such as Graham Turbiville, Thomas Wolfe, John Erickson participated are contained in Soviet Naval Developments, Capability and Context and Soviet Naval Policy, Objectives and Constraints both edited by Michael McGwire.

A Summary of the Proceedings from Seminar III, conducted in 1974 and prepared by Ken Booth, provided additional information concerning Soviet naval developments.

3) Professional papers prepared by members of the Center for Naval Analyses, Arlington, Virginia, assisted my analysis of Soviet naval developments. Particularly helpful in assessing Soviet naval shipbuilding and naval operations were the papers prepared by Robert G. Weinland, James McConnell, and Anne Kelly.

CHAPTER II

RUSSIAN NAVAL INFANTRY - A PERSPECTIVE

Soviet naval infantry traces its birth to 16 November 1705, when Peter the Great established the first naval infantry force called the "Sea Regiment."[1] It was Peter's ambition to establish Russia as the leading naval power in the Baltic and beyond that to link his country to the oceans of the world. Peter realized the importance of controlling the Baltic coastal approaches and his naval infantry forces were specifically designed to assist in the achievement of this goal.

Peter's concern for naval mobility was in response to the realities facing Russia. Peter was the ruler of a landlocked nation. The Baltic was practically a Swedish lake and the Black Sea belonged entirely to the Turks. Russia, as naval historian F. T. Jane describes,

> . . . was little better than a mass of central territories, bounded on the west and south by more or less hostile nations, on the east by the savage and almost unknown wastes of Asia, while on the north she had some coast line, it was only on the inhospitable Arctic Seas.[2]

If Russia was to become a major power, she needed growth, expansion, a dramatic increase in maritime commerce, and access to distant capitals and trade centers.

Peter, motivated by a strong desire for "westernization," adopted a foreign policy which was predicated on access to the world's oceans.

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[1]Robert W. Daly, "Russian Combat Landings," Marine Corps Gazette, June 1969, p. 42.

[2]Fred T. Jane, Imperial Russian Navy (London: Thackery & Co., 1899), p. 44.

Specifically, he desired access to the Black Sea in the south and outlets to the west on the Baltic. In the early eighteenth century, Turkey and Sweden, powers hostile to Russia, controlled these sea approaches. Russia could not get out but the enemy could get in. Security was another concern which demanded immediate attention. Peter would need a strong navy and the capability to project his armed forces ashore and ensure control. This became an essential feature of Peter's overall security program. Inherent in this strategy would be the capability to secure critical approaches to the Russian heartland.

The "Sea Regiment," the title assigned to Russia's first organization of naval infantry, was established with these missions in mind. In addition to conducting landing operations, naval infantry forces were designed to guard ships, defend naval shore facilities, and provide the nucleus for naval boarding parties.[3] Peter's initial naval infantry forces were easily created as he transferred two regiments of infantry troops from his Army to his newly created Baltic fleet. He initially organized this force in ten 120-man companies and then in 1714, as his fleet neared completion, reorganized the naval infantry into five battalions of 500-600 men each. Naval infantry forces were assigned afloat as 25 percent of a sailing vessel and 40 percent of a galley. The employment of these forces was innovative, unlike the British Marines whose role was basically shipboard police.[4]

After his army defeated the Swedes in the land battle at Poltava in 1709, Peter concentrated his naval effort toward securing vital areas

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[3]Daly, op. cit., p. 42.

[4]Ibid.

along the Baltic coast. In 1713 Peter appointed Count Feodor Apraxin (1671-1728) as his Naval Commander-in-Chief and assigned him the rank of Admiral-General. Peter assumed the rank of Vice Admiral himself and in the next eight years Russia's Navy and Naval Infantry would launch repeated expeditionary assaults against Sweden.[5] In July 1714, Peter amasse an expeditionary naval infantry force of 24,000 men and launched a successful amphibious assault against the Swedes at Hango Ud in the Finnish fiords. The amphibious expeditions continued and in 1719 Peter landed 30,000 troops on Sweden's shores. These repeated assaults wrought destruction on Sweden and finally forced her capitulation.

When the Great Northern War came to an end with the Treaty of Nystadt in 1721, Russia's position as a great power and as a Baltic Sea power was confirmed. Peter had constructed a powerful Navy consisting of 58 ships of the line, 207 sailing vessels, and significant projection potential consisting of over 400 vessels designed for amphibious operations and a trained expeditionary force of 50,000 troops.[6] Although unsuccessful in his attempts to establish Russian predominance on the Black Sea, Peter secured outlets along the Baltic. At the time of his death, the Russian Navy was the strongest in the Baltic. Peter had ended Swedish supremacy and gained access on the Baltic coast at Nyenschantz (St. Petersburg).

Naval infantry forces continued as part of the Russian Navy in the succeeding years. Following Peter's death, the Russian Navy no longer played as important a role in the foreign policies of her Tsarist leaders.

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[5]Donald W. Mitchell, History of Russian and Soviet Seapower (New York: Macmillian Co., 1974), p. 30.

[6]Admiral Sergei G. Gorshkov, Navies in War and Peace, translated in Red Star Rising at Sea (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1974), p. 25.

Generally, the next thirty years witnessed a decline in the importance of the Russian Navy and its naval infantry force. Although the Russian military was revitalized under Elizabeth (1741-1761) and naval infantry forces saw limited success in the war against Prussia (Landings Memel, 1757, and Kolberg, 1761), it was not until Catherine II's ascendancy that Russian seapower status was restored.[7]

Catherine the Great ruled Russia during the period 1762-1796. During her reign the Russian Navy returned to the stature enjoyed under Peter the Great. Catherine followed many of Peter's plans and policies, making continuous and effective use of seapower as an important element of her foreign policy. Based on a desire for Russian expansion, economic development, and the westernization of Russia, Catherine commenced major shipbuilding programs and staffed her navy with experienced foreign naval officers. Where Peter had failed in his attempt to gain warm water access on the Black Sea, Catherine succeeded and expanded Russian territories on the southern flank.

During the first Turkish War (1769-1774), Catherine deployed elements of her Baltic fleet into the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. Naval infantry, although limited in size, conducted successful landing operations at Navarino, Lemnos, and Chesma. Meanwhile, the Black Sea fleet was being resurrected and the fleet, with her embarked naval infantry forces, would prove most useful in cooperating with Russian land armies along the Black Sea coast. By the time of Catherine's war with Sweden (1788-1790), naval infantry forces had been increased. A complement of naval infantry was assigned to each Russian ship based on the size of the

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[7]Jane, op. cit., p. 71.

ship and the campaign objective. A Russian 80-gun battleship possessed approximately 160-165 embarked naval infantry, while the smaller frigates carried approximately 55 naval infantry personnel. By 1777 Russian naval infantry consisted of eight 848-man battalions, each equally divided into the First and Second Russian Fleet Divisions. By 1782 these battalions were further increased by the addition of two companies. The naval infantry battalion's total strength was approaching 1,180 men. A Fleet Division was then approximately 4,700 men. During the later stages of the Second Turkish War, the Baltic fleet consisted of some 40 battleships with its organic naval infantry fleet divisions consisting of a force of 9,400.[8]

Catherine the Great's aggressive foreign policy and most intelligent use of her navy and naval infantry had reaped important dividends for Russia. She had strengthened Russia's political posture in Europe. The results of two wars with Turkey gave Russia important new territory and rights. The final partition of Poland occurred in 1793 and by this time Russia had annexed the Crimea, portions of the Caucasus, and territories between the Dniester and Bug Rivers. Russia had gained the right of freedom of passage for Russian vessels through the Bosporous and Dardanelles. The Russian Black Sea coastline was extended and the ports of Sevastopol and Odessa were rapidly increasing Russian trade and commerce into the Mediterranean. Russian naval infantry had proven to be a useful instrument in Catherine's policy of expanding Russian territory, ensuring the security of her southern flank while permitting increased economic development and commerce via the Black and Mediterranean Seas.[9]

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[8]Mitchell, op. cit., p. 71.

[9]Norman E. Saul, Russia and the Mediterranean (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 8.

Russian naval infantry combat landings in the Adriatic, Aegean, and Black Seas continued during the Napoleonic Wars. The Black Sea Fleet combat landings under the leadership of Admiral Ushakov were successful in capturing the Ionian Islands and defeating the French garrisons at Cerigo, Zante, Ithaca, and Corfu in 1799. Admiral Gorshkov points to the strategical importance of these naval actions:

> The political consequences of the victory of the Russian Navy in the Mediterranean Sea were very significant. Napoleon felt that the Ionian Islands were the most important jump-off position for military actions against Egypt, the Balkans, Constantinople, and the south of Russia. Therefore expelling of the French from the Ionian Archipelago radically altered the situation in the Mediterranean Sea. Thus the Navy was the most powerful weapon of the foreign policy of Russia who by the actions of her Navy drew Italy, Sardinia, and even Tunisia into her own sphere of influence.[10]

By 1811 naval infantry forces had reached a total of seven regiments. During the following year, however, in response to Napoleon's invasion of Russia, Russian naval infantry forces found themselves in a new role fighting alongside and under the operational control of the Russian Army. In an effort to bolster the defense of the homeland due to Napoleon's superior combat strength, Russian forces withdrew into the heart of Russia. The Russian Army retired, allowing Napoleon to overextend his forces, lengthen his supporting logistical lines, and eventually deplete his resources. As Napoleon's forces retreated from Moscow, the 25th and 28th Naval Infantry Units, under the operational control of the Russian Minister of War, [illegible]ed in the pursuit and eviction of Napoleonic forces from Russian soil.[11]

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[10]Gorshkov, op. cit., p. 18.

[11]Daly, op. cit., p. 42.

Historical accounts of the naval infantry following the Napoleonic Wars are sparse. It is quite possible that this lack of historical accountability may be explained by a delay in returning the naval infantry forces to their former naval structure. The successful landing operations conducted by the Russian Navy against the Turks in 1828-1829, accomplished without structured naval infantry forces, lends credence to this contention. Although the exact date of their return is unclear, a review of naval historian F. T. Jane's book, Imperial Russian Navy, indicates that the naval infantry forces did exist within the Russian naval structure prior to the Crimean War (1853-1856). Specifically, a Naval Infantry Training Detachment and a Naval Infantry Intendancy, under a lieutenant general, existed as part of the Russian Naval Staff.[12] Additionally, F. T. Jane indicates that 281 officers in naval infantry artillery and 131 naval infantry officers assigned afloat, as well as 20,000 naval infantry personnel, were included in the Navy's personnel strength.[13] Naval infantry forces during this period saw service with naval forces afloat and on land. Until the Crimean War, Russian warships had two commands, the sailing command and the fighting command. Naval infantry artillerists fired naval guns just as they manned naval coast artillery.

The decline of Russia as a sea power culminated with the total defeat of the Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol in 1854. When the Crimean War ended, the fortunes of the Russian Navy had significantly declined. Writing in 1899 F. T. Jane observed that, "In one way or another, as much as suicide as by anything else, the Russian Navy had become nearly

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[12] Jane, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

[13] Ibid.

nonexistent when the Crimean War ended."[14] Following the war, Russia commenced a reconstruction program. This program included shipbuilding and a revision of the naval personnel organization. The revision, as it pertained to the Russian naval infantry, was particularly significant because when it was completed in 1877, separate Marine identity within the Russian Navy had disappeared. No longer were Marines uniquely identified as a separate branch or force within the Navy. F. T. Jane, commenting on the personnel revisions, states:

> In the period under review the Marines—who were analogous to the military element afloat in the British Navy at the time of the Armada, and in the French Navy during the Great War, rather than to Marines as we understand them—the "Marines" were absorbed into the Navy generally. Longer than any other nation, Russia held out against the change whereby the difference between those who fought the ships and those who sailed them was abolished.[15]

As a result of the Crimean War, Russia was prohibited from having a fleet in the Black Sea. In the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), Russia again failed in her efforts to gain exits to the Mediterranean. Subsequently, during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Russia once again suffered defeat. Admiral Gorshkov offers an analysis:

> The degradation of Tsarist Russia, her governmental, economic, political, and military backwardness and a complete lack of understanding by ruling circles of the importance of sea power (which was the basic reason for the weakness of the Navy)—all of these factors brought Tsarism to military defeat.[16]

Naval infantry units, having lost their separate identity after the Crimean War, did not reappear with Russian armed forces until World

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[14] Ibid., pp. 178-179.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Gorshkov, op. cit., p. 35.

War I when a naval infantry unit was activated in the Baltic Fleet.[17] Elements of this unit conducted an amphibious landing at Domesnes in the southern Baltic in October 1916 and assisted the Russian Sixth Army against the Germans. Naval infantry forces of the Baltic Fleet, specifically trained for amphibious operations, conducted three additional landings in the Baltic area during World War I. Although over 50,000 Russian troops participated in amphibious operations during 1916, it appears that only three limited tactical landings in support of Russian Armies were conducted by naval infantry forces.[18]

The foregoing perspective reveals the historical continuity of Russian naval infantry from its birth under Peter the Great until the October Revolution in 1917. In this period of Russian history, the missions assigned naval infantry forces were in response to specific policies adopted by the political leadership. The changes in the roles in which naval infantry forces were used varied in accordance with the objectives or goals of this leadership. Under Tsarist rulers whose goals were outward looking, the Navy usually took on greater importance and conversely, under leaders who were inwardly oriented, concerned with domestic problems, and defensive in nature, the Navy's importance waned. Under Peter and Catherine, naval infantry forces were very useful in achieving foreign policy objectives. Naval infantry combat landings against the Swedes permitted Peter the Great to secure outlets in the west and end Swedish dominance in the Baltic. Naval infantry forces participated in the

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[17] Charles S. Pritchard, "Soviet Marines," To Use the Sea (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1973), p. 258.

[18] Major John F. Meehan, III, "Soviet Marine Corps," Military Review, October 1972, p. 86.

capture of the Prussian naval fortress Kolberg during the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and under Catherine the Great, their amphibious exploits significantly assisted Russia's efforts to gain access to the Mediterranean and insure the defense of Russia's southwestern border.[19] Russian naval infantry embarked in naval vessels served as a means of projecting Russian influence into the Mediterranean, expanded her trade, and increasing Russian economic development. Russian naval infantry forces served as an additional reservoir of experienced foot soldiers and reinforced Russian land armies in the defense of the homeland during the Napoleonic invasion.

In the coastal areas of the Black Sea and the Baltic, naval infantry combat landings from seaward flanks demonstrated effective and coordinated support of the Army's land campaign. The naval infantry's capability to help achieve foreign policy objectives was directly dependent on the policies of the political leadership. Under Tsarist policies that were essentially confined to the dimensions of the Russian land mass, the Russian Navy declined in stature and assumed lesser importance. For example, following the Napoleonic Wars, the Russian Fleet included a mere five ships of the line and ten frigates capable of putting to sea. Admiral Gorshkov points out that the head of the Russian Navy Department during this period was Admiral Chichagov, "a dull figure, who considered the Navy an onerous, needless luxury for the State." Again, following the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), Russia was forced to concede control of the Black Sea straits to Great Britain because Russia did not possess a powerful Navy.[20]

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[19] Gorshkov, op. cit., pp. 18-21.

[20] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

As Russia transitioned to a new state, the heritage remained. However, the new revolutionary leaders had pressing concerns; most which were of an internal nature. Until the new Bolshevik leadership perceived a stable domestic environment and turned to external concerns, naval infantry would remain absent from the organizational structure of the Soviet military.

CHAPTER III

NEW TIMES, NEW TASKS

An order issued in June 1940 activated the first Soviet Naval Infantry Brigade. This unit, formed in the Baltic to support the Soviet Union's invasion of Finland, was the sole landing unit activated prior to World War II.[1]

More than twenty-two years had passed before the Soviet state made the decision to activate a naval infantry force. To understand why naval infantry was absent during the formative years of the Soviet Union it is first necessary to examine the initial pressures and requirements placed upon Soviet leadership. Priorities demanded attention in numerous areas. There were military pressures as well as political, economic, and social priorities. But there was no significant pressure for a naval infantry force. The following overview of the turbulent years following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution substantiates the conclusion that there was no valid reason to allocate scarce resources for a naval infantry force.

The Early Years. The period surrounding World War I and the Civil War was perhaps the bloodiest and most confused era of Russian history. In October 1917 the Bolsheviks overthrew the provisional government and Lenin emerged as the leader of a new state. The Bolsheviks had indeed seized power but enormous difficulties confronted the new leadership. The revolution was successful in destroying the autocracy but the revolution was

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[1]Colonel B. I. Sergeyenko, "The Development of Landing Forces," Morskoi Sbornik, No. 3, 1971, p. 13. Machine translation, provided by U.S. Naval War College.

far from complete. Destruction of an existing social system is only one-half of a successful revolution. The other half is the building of a new social system. But as 1917 ended, Lenin was faced with even more pressing concerns. War threatened the very existence of the infant socialist state. Although a preliminary armistice agreement was reached at Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers as early as 5 December 1917, the problem was far from solved. In January and early February 1918 delegations from Soviet Russia and from Germany continued to discuss the questions of peace and war on the German-Soviet Russian frontier. On 10 February 1918 Trotsky invoked his "no war, no peace formula;" he refused to agree to the German demands, announced that the war was at an end, and left Brest-Litovsk. That of course was no solution. Within a week, the Germans launched a new offensive which moved forward unopposed. Two weeks later, the Bolshevik delegation signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Soviet Russia had yielded to the demands of the Central Powers. Security was hardly assured. The new frontier was perilously close to the capital city of Petrograd and consequently the government was promptly transferred to Moscow.

Simultaneous with the pressures caused by the external threat, Soviet Russia faced a significantly more dangerous threat from within even before the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Anti-Bolshevik forces had been assembled and launched a Civil War lasting three more years.

Lenin and his cohorts had to deal with a classic case of crisis management. Although serious security problems remained, economic and social difficulties similarly plagued the Soviet leadership. There was still no time to direct attention to the second half of the revolution. People were exhausted, disillusioned, and tired after nearly seven years of war. The industrial base had all but disintegrated. Soviet production

was reduced to one-fifth of the pre-war level. There was a constant breakdown of transportation and communication systems. Food shortages were spreading and sporadic local seizures of property were occurring all over the country. This widespread discontentment was vividly demonstrated by the Kronstadt Rebellion in February and March 1921. The Kronstadt sailors, previously the most fervent revolutionaries of the new state, demanded "Soviets without Communists." Kronstadt's location on an island in sight of Petrograd made the political orientation of this garrison very important. The rebellion was quelled but Lenin understood that Kronstadt was symptomatic of widespread, popular discontent. At the X Party Congress which was being held at the time of the Kronstadt Rebellion, measures were adopted which were aimed in part at reducing this discontent. Concessions were made but the Soviet leadership still maintained the "Commanding Heights." Key industrial, trade, and transportation sectors were kept under strict state control. However, conditional and temporary retreat from Communist objectives in the agricultural sector were effected. Forced requisitioning of agricultural surpluses was abandoned in favor of a tax in kind set at a fixed percentage of production. This specific measure was the central element in Lenin's "New Economic Policy."[2]

On 21 January 1924 Lenin died. Lenin had hoped that his revolution in Russia would have touched off the first spark of a world revolution. In fact, Lenin had expected a number of revolutions in Western Europe. Although attempts were made in Germany and Hungary, they failed. The Soviet Union remained the world's only socialist state.

After a period of triumvirate leadership, Stalin emerged as the leader of the Soviet state. It became clear to Stalin that if the Soviet

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[2]Richard F. Rosser, Introduction to Soviet Foreign Policy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc., 1969), p. 309.

Union was to exist in a hostile world, the state must be able to stand alone. This conclusion prompted the start of the second half of the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1929 Stalin's "Socialism in one Country," was Russia's second revolution and it was even more radical than the first. Rapid industrialization and forced collectivization were to transform the Soviet state. It was also to provide Stalin a solution to the essential political and economical problems facing his young socialist state. In a famous speech delivered to a group of business executives in February 1931, Stalin dramatically describes the urgency and importance of rapid and forceful industrialization:

> No, comrades, . . . the pace must not be slackened! On the contrary, we must quicken it as much as is within our powers and possibilities. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the working class of the whole world.
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> To slacken the pace would mean to lag behind; and those who lag behind are beaten. We do not want to be beaten. No, we don't want to. The history of old . . . Russia . . . she was ceaselessly beaten for her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol Khans, she was beaten by Turkish Beys, she was beaten by Swedish feudal lords, she was beaten by Polish-Lithuanian Pans, she was beaten by Anglo-French capitalists, she was beaten by Japanese barons, she was beaten by all—for her backwardness. For military backwardness, for cultural backwardness, for political backwardness, for industrial backwardness, for agricultural backwardness. She was beaten because to beat her was profitable and went unpunished. You remember the words of the pre-revolutionary poet: 'Thou art poor and thou art plentiful, thou art mighty and thou art helpless, Mother Russia.'
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> . . . We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this lag in ten years. Either we do it or they crush us.[3]

Stalin's plan was clear: quickly build an industrial base from which economic and military power could develop. Once a foundation was

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[3]Isaac Deutscher, Stalin. A Political Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 328.

established, equipment necessary for a conventional, modern military force could be built. Only then would the Soviet Union have a measure of security from the hostile world around her.

The relationship between rapid industrialization, centrally controlled five-year economic plans, and military requirements are clearly explained by the then Defense Commisar K. E. Voroshilov:

> 1. The five-year plan for national economy should take as its starting point the inevitability of an armed attack on the USSR and consequently the necessity, within the limits of material resources, of organizing a defense of the Soviet Union that will guarantee the victorious repulse of the united forces of our probable enemies.
>
> 2. The industrialization of the country predetermines the fighting capacity of the USSR. And for this very reason military considerations should introduce certain correctives in the concrete plans for industrial construction. In particular: a. regionalization of industry should correspond to the demands of strategic security; b. metallurgy—both ferrous and especially non-ferrous, in the very near future must guarantee the minimum requirements of defense; c. the general plan for the development of industry should provide for the investment of sufficient funds in those branches which are at present the weak spots in our economy and defense (auto-tractor production, chemical industry, etc.)
>
> 3. The development of agriculture should provide for as rapid as possible a solution of the problem of raw materials from internal sources, freeing us in that way from imports and dependence on foreign countries.
>
> 4. The creation of reserves (natural and monetary) should be undertaken on the basis of a careful consideration of defense needs.
>
> 5. The construction of the armed forces (the Red Army, the Navy and the Air Force) should proceed on the basis of the necessity of raising the technical and military power to the level of a first-class European army.
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> 6. Along with the five-year plan, it is necessary immediately to undertake the detailed working out of the planning of the whole national economy in time of war . . .[4]

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[4]Helen G. Pratt and Harriet L. Moore, Russia, A Short History (New York: John Day Co., 1947), pp. 224-225.

Central to Voroshilov's remarks was the perception that the primary external security threat was land invasion. Stalin understood the strength of the Soviet Union was derived from a strong continental base. Organization of the Red Army developed in accordance with these perceived requirements. Armored and mechanized units were created. With the addition of artillery divisions and anti-aircraft battalions, the Red Army developed into a modern, mechanized force organized along conventional lines.

To support the premise that land invasion was the most serious threat, the Soviet Navy was to function in support of the ground force. The major naval concerns of the pre-World War II period were border security and the protection of the land mass against external hostile forces. At this time, projection of power and the expansion of power through military measures were not even considered specific goals in Soviet strategy.

Pre-war Naval Developments. Soviet naval developments during the formative years of the new state were largely limited to rebuilding a severely weakened fleet. At the end of the Civil War, no major warships existed in the Arctic or Pacific areas. The total naval inventory consisted of one battleship, eight destroyers, and some smaller craft.[5] The remaining elements of the Soviet Fleet were placed in reserve. Before a meaningful shipbuilding program could be undertaken, a supportive industrial base was required. The first substantial naval construction plan commenced as part of the first Five Year Plan. As naval historian Donald Mitchell points out, "This plan aimed at the creation of a modern shipbuilding industry

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[5]Norman O. Polmar, Soviet Naval Power, Challenge for the 1970's (New York: Crane, Russak & Co., 1972), p. 7.

and the completion of transports, merchant vessels, more than 400 towed and self-propelled barges, some submarines and small naval craft."[6]

Chart 2

SOVIET NAVAL SHIPBUILDING 1928-1941

	1928	1934	1936	1939	1941
Battleships	3	3	3	3	3
Cruisers	5	7	9	5	7
Destroyers	24	26	19	30	66
Submarines	18	22	38	150	218
Torpedo Boats	15	UNK	UNK	130	269

Jane's Fighting Ships, 1928-1941, Oscar Parkes, Francis E. McMurtie (eds.), Sampson Low, Marston and Co., London. Admiral Sergei E. Gorshkov, Navies in War and Peace, translated Red Star Rising at Sea, pp. 66-96.

The Second and Third Five Year Plans called for the steady expansion of shipbuilding facilities. Based on the mission and the functions the Soviet Navy was expected to perform, the Second Five Year Plan (1933-1937) included the construction of more submarines, a few destroyers, and more torpedo boats. Large surface ship construction was of lesser importance. The Third Five Year Plan (1937-1942) called for the continued construction of submarines, torpedo boats as well as a few major surface combatants. Soviet construction efforts were designed to build a navy for limited operations within the coastal confines of the Soviet Union.

[6]Donald W. Mitchell, History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power (New York: Macmillian Publishing Co., 1974), p. 365.

The Soviet Navy was to be defensively oriented. It would operate in coordination with the Red Army to insure the territorial integrity of the state. Naval construction concentrated on the major weapon of the mobile "mosquito fleet," the submarine. Admiral Orlov, Naval Commander-in-Chief, boasted that from 1933 to 1937 the submarine force had increased by "715 percent."[7] Admiral Gorshkov writing in Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest) stated that the tonnage of the submarine fleet increased by 50,385 tons during the period from 1931 to 1941.[8] The outcome of this rapid construction program was that prior to the commencement of World War II, the Soviet Navy had built the largest submarine force in the world.[9] Submarines were needed to attack hostile shipping and convoys. Smaller combatants, such as minesweepers and torpedo boats, would reinforce coastal defense forces along the Soviet periphery.

As part of the developing naval policy, Soviet ships were positioned in the Baltic and Black Sea areas protecting the sea approaches to the Soviet Union. A Pacific Fleet was created in 1932 and a Northern Fleet in 1933 to further enhance and strengthen the territorial security of the Soviet homeland.

While Soviet naval development during the thirties was predominantly concerned with developing a defensive capability to protect the Soviet borders, it is doubtful that any attention was paid toward developing a ground component for the Soviet Navy. Admiral Gorshkov writing

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[7]Robert W. Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1968), p. 24.

[8]Gorshkov, "Zabota partii o flote," Morskoi Sbornik, No. 7, July 1963, p. 10; contained in George E. Hudson, The Soviet Navy Enters the Nuclear Age: The Development of Soviet Naval Doctrine, 1953-1973 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1975), p. 70.

[9]Polmar, op. cit., p. 14.

in Navies in War and Peace indicated that a "theory of amphibious landing was developed in the 1930's."[10] This theory, however, envisionaged that Soviet ground forces, operating jointly with the navy, would be able to conduct amphibious operations. The theory obviously did not involve the use of a specially trained, single-purpose force. Soviet experience in the Russo-Finnish War of 1939-1940 suggests that the reason for activating the First Naval Infantry Brigade in 1940 was attributable to the dismal performance of amphibious landings by the ground force. Raymond L. Garthoff writing in Soviet Military Doctrine stated that during the Finnish War several amphibious landings were made. However, all either failed or were cancelled because of heavy artillery opposition.[11] It is reasonable to conclude that although a theory for conducting amphibious operations was developed, the need for specially trained forces and equipment was not recognized. The Soviet experience in the Russo-Finnish War indicated the flaw of using untrained troops and as we shall see later, it took the experiences of the Great Patriotic War to convince the Soviet leadership to train such a force.

Industrialization was working. The construction of eight additional major shipbuilding yards during the late 1930's and early 1940's had significantly enlarged the Soviet Fleet.[12] On the eve of the war with Germany, the Soviet Union's industrial base had produced a navy whose inventory consisted of three battleships, seven light cruisers, 66 destroyers, 22 escort ships, 80 minesweepers, 269 torpedo boats, 218 submarines,

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[10]Admiral Sergei G. Gorshkov, Navies in War and Peace, translated Red Star Rising at Sea (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1974), p. 73.

[11]Raymond L. Garthoff, Soviet Military Doctrine (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1953), p. 371.

[12]Polmar, op. cit., p. 10.

and 260 coastal artillery batteries. This inventory represented a force which ranked the Soviet Union sixth or seventh in the navies of the world.[13]

This increased naval strength combined with the establishment of an independent naval ministry in 1938 suggests that the Soviet Navy was capable of assuming more important independent tasks. An editorial appearing in the February 1941 issue of Morskoi Sbornik stated:

> The Red Navy as an inaccessible stronghold stands on guard of the borders of the great Soviet Union, ready, in case of attack on Soviet soil, to inflict a shattering blow to the enemy in his territory in his waters.[14]

Naval Developments in World War II. On 22 June 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union and disproved any thoughts of a large navy conducting independent missions. As Raymond Garthoff pointed out, the Soviet Navy "never engaged in a major naval battle" during World War II.[15] This reality stemmed from the fact that the majority of naval construction had concentrated on small vessels, submarines, and patrol boats. Another factor which influenced naval perfcrmance was the military purge. As a result of the great purges of the late thirties, naval leadership lacked experience. Naval commanders such as Orlov, Ludri, and Aleksondrov as well as nearly 80 percent of all naval captains had lost their lives in the period of the great purges.[16]

The Soviet Navy was restricted to a defensive strategy: protecting the Army's flanks, insuring sea communications for the Soviet Union,

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[13]Gorshkov, op. cit., p. 73.

[14]Editorial, "Na strazhe granits Sovetskogo Soiuza," (Beyond the Borders of the Soviet Union), Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), February 1941, p. 6; contained in Hudson, op. cit., p. 71.

[15]Garthoff, op. cit., p. 366.

[16]Mitchell, op. cit., p. 373.

defending key cities, and serving as merchant vessels supporting besieged ports.[17] Admiral Gorshkov summed up the mission of the Soviet Navy in World War II when he said that the navy was, "To operate in concert with major ground forces groupings in littoral areas and reliably cover their flanks and rear."[18]

Amphibious operations were considered an essential part of combined operations with ground forces. The 1940 field regulations of the Red Army stated:

> The naval fleet can demonstrate cooperation to troops by its struggle against the hostile fleet, by maneuver directed immediately against troops of the enemy (a landing), and by the fire of its artillery on hostile troops.
>
> In the first order, troops give the fleet cooperation by seizing and holding littoral points (bases, ports, etc.) important to the fleet, giving aid in preserving the fleet against fire from the shore, covering the fleet from the air by its combat aviation and by fire means.[19]

As previously mentioned, earlier Soviet experiences with amphibious operations during the Russo Finnish War were ineffective. Although the theory had obviously been designed, the requisite amount of training and coordination had not been performed. Thus, Admiral Gorshkov points out that:

> The well developed theory for conducting amphibious operations did not receive the needed material or organizational implementation for several reasons (mainly of an economic nature): by the outbreak of war not one of our fleets had a single specially constructed landing ship. The fleets also did not have the required number of surface gunnery ships to support the landing of a landing force because it was believed that this would be done by gunboats, cruisers, and destroyers.[20]

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[17] Herrick, op. cit., p. 50.

[18] Gorshkov, op. cit., p. 73.

[19] Polevoi Ustav Krasnoi Armii, 1940 Goda (Field Regulations of the Red Army, 1940), Gosvoenizdat, NKO, Moscow, 1940, p. 309, para. 660. Contained in Garthoff, op. cit., pp. 369-370.

[20] Gorshkov, op. cit., p. 73.

Admiral Gorshkov concluded that as a result, "the tactical cooperation of ships and army units was worked out only within general frameworks, and the amphibious training of the ground troops was relegated to a secondary position."[21]

Not only did the fleet lack the specialized landing craft, ships, and experience but more importantly not one of the Soviet fleets possessed a specially trained force, i.e., naval infantry.[22]

The rapid German offensive at the outset of World War II had trapped much of the Soviet Baltic and Black Sea Fleet at their berths. With their ships locked in port, Soviet sailors went ashore to continue the defense. History was repeated. Ad hoc naval infantry units were formed as they had been in the Crimean and Port Arthur episodes. The tasks of defending the besieged naval bases and conducting amphibious operations in support of the Red Army's flanks were assumed by these improvised units. Raymond Garthoff writing in Soviet Military Doctrine describes the situation:

> In many cases the naval surface vessels were unable to operate, and their crews were transformed into marines. Students from the coastal artillery schools were also converted into marines. . . . Especially in the defense of Odessa, Sevastopol, Stalingrad, Leningrad, Hango, and Tallin did naval personnel from the sea and internal flotilla units join in the land battle as shock infantry. Naval coastal and antiaircraft artillery was used in Leningrad and elsewhere and was even taken to Moscow in the fall of 1941 for antiaircraft defense.[23]

Admiral Nikolai I. Krylov, a participant in the defense of Odessa, described the process of naval infantry activation as follows:

> Our military terminology of the time did not include the concept of 'Marines'. The Odessa Naval base designated its Red Fleet

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 74.

[23] Garthoff, op. cit., pp. 370-371.

> regiments simply as the First and Second Naval Regiments. But these units were, in fact, Marines, probably some of the very first of the war.[24]

Ad hoc naval infantry units expanded. In October 1941 a decision was made to form twenty-five additional brigades. Labelled the "Black Death," "Black Cloud," and "Commissars in Pea Jackets," these forces gained the respected admiration of the Germans for their tenacity and ferocity.[25]

The early amphibious exploits of these ad hoc units were conducted with limited training, inadequate support, limited planning, and poor coordination. The lack of specialized equipment, landing craft, and ships further compounded the problem. Admiral Isakov, Vice Commissar for Naval Affairs during World War II, noted that these early amphibious exploits "lacked important, special landing craft, naval infantry units were forced to use trawlers, and other makeshift vessels, blunting the effectiveness of these operations."[26]

Rear Admiral Stalbo reinforces this point:

> In order to land forces in the war year, we had to resort to using warships, and poorly-suited ships and boats. However, even with these forces and equipment the fleets successfully penetrated the enemy's defense and landed forces, although they were limited with respect to personnel and as a rule without artillery and tanks. The lack of specialized landing ships often led to considerable losses of landing forces and made weather conditions of special significance.
>
> Our lack of large formations of naval infantry also considerably influenced the success of landing operations especially in the first months of the war.[27]

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[24] Pritchard, op. cit., p. 258.

[25] Frederick C. Turner, "Resurgent Soviet Marines," Marine Corps Gazette, June 1969, p. 30.

[26] Admiral I. S. Isakov, Red Fleet in the Second World War (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1945), p. 10; contained in Hudson, op. cit., p. 72.

[27] Rear Admiral K. A. Stalbo, "The Naval Art in the Landings of the Great Patriotic War," Morskoi Sbornik, No. 3, 1970, p. 3. Machine translation, provided by U.S. Naval War College.

These limitations were responsible for many of the failures experienced during the earlier part of the war. The most notable disaster was the "New Peterhof" landing in October 1941 near Leningrad, in which almost the entire assaulting unit was eliminated.

The Soviet leadership recognized the difficulties in conducting amphibious operations. After the initiative had passed to the Red Army in the summer of 1943, formal schools specifically designed to train naval infantry personnel were established.[28]

The earlier ad hoc units soon gave way to organized units such as "Naval Infantry Brigades" and "Independent Naval Infantry Battalions." Up to 25 brigades of 3,000 men each were activated in World War II. These units were formally structured and organized. Their primary mission was the conduct of amphibious operations. The naval infantry made up the initial assault echelon in the amphibious landing. They were reserved for this special assault task and were usually withdrawn once the beachhead was secure.[29]

The 1944 naval infantry brigade organization consisted of four to six battalions, one or two artillery battalions, attached mortar, service and administrative units, and were reinforced with organic tank units. Naval infantry units received additional training and their commanders conducted detailed planning, including hydrographic surveys and beach reconnaissance in preparation for amphibious assaults. Coordination was emphasized, and dress rehearsals and formal briefings preceded their amphibious operations.

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[28]Gorshkov, op. cit., p. 94.

[29]Garthoff, op. cit., pp. 370-371.

Soviet amphibious warfare doctrine was characterized by intense air, artillery and shore bombardment. Smoke was used to gain concealment. These tactics were complemented by swift movement by the landing forces. At times, "Desant" operations included the simultaneous landing of an airborne force. The Soviet landing at Grigoryevka in 1941 used this tactic. The Kerch-Feodosiya landing operation in December 1941 was unique in that the landing force attacked under the cover of a smoke screen and disembarked at the enemy's piers.[30] During the operation, additional naval forces and naval air cover supported the operation. The Soviets realized the vital necessity of air superiority in the objective area and were reluctant to operate beyond the range of their fighter aircraft. Aircraft was ferried to the Kerch Peninsula to support the Feodosiya landing.[31]

Amphibious operations were conducted in the following phases: preparation, overseas movement, beachhead assault, landing execution of the mission ashore, mopping up, and in the event of defeat, withdrawal.[32] This is similar, with some modification, to the doctrine developed by U.S. Marines, which envisioned the stages as: planning, embarkation, rehearsal and movement to the objective area, and assault.[33]

At the end of World War II the Soviet Union possessed large naval infantry complements as part of their armed forces. Collocated with their fleets, they totalled 125,000 in the Baltic, 60,000 in the Black Sea,

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[30] Stalbo, op. cit., p. 9.

[31] Ibid., p. 11.

[32] Ibid., p. 2.

[33] Landing Force Manual 01, Doctrine for Amphibious Operations, Department of the Navy, 1 August 1967, pp. 1-5.

40,000 in the Northern Fleet, and 143,000 in the Pacific Fleet.[34]

Although only four of the 114 landings conducted by the Soviet naval infantry were considered large-scale operations, the naval infantry takes great pride in relating that 61 of their 110 landing operations were prepared in less than 24 hours.[35]

The experience gained in combat during World War II had taught the Soviet naval leaders a number of lessons. Some of the lessons would prove valuable in the future and result in changes to Soviet naval strategy and tactics. Writing in 1963 Admiral Gorshkov stated, "During World War II it was determined that operations of large surface ships far from their shores without reliable protection from air attack had become practically impossible." The importance of air support was not directed toward surface naval warfare alone. The necessity for close air support in the conduct of amphibious operations was also abundantly clear.[36]

Amphibious operations were considered highly successful. The value of an amphibious capability was emphasized by Admiral Isakov, Soviet Naval Chief of Staff during World War II in his naval history of World War II:

> Throughout the war, the enemy was constantly menaced by our landing forces in various sectors of the Black Sea coast. This compelled the German command to maintain large forces of troops, artillery and other armaments along the coasts to fend off potential Soviet landing forces. . . . Thus operations by our fleet riveted the enemy to the coasts and paralyzed large bodies of men which otherwise could have been hurled into action at the front.[37]

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[34]Stalbo, op. cit., p. 12.

[35]The four operations referenced include Kerch Feodosiya in 1941-1942, Novorossisk 1943, Kerch-Eltigen 1943, and Moon Sound Landing 1944. Stalbo, op. cit., p. 2.

[36]Herrick, op. cit., p. 54.

[37]Admiral I. S. Isakov, The Red Fleet in the Second World War (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1944), pp. 92-93.

The Soviet Navy had made an invaluable contribution to the war effort. They provided thousands of men rapidly mobilized to fight in consort with the ground forces. Soviet naval infantry units had significantly assisted the navy in carrying out their most important task, protection of the strategic flanks of the Red Army. Amphibious landing operations had a considerable effect on the course of events in the coastal areas. Official Soviet estimates state that the navy landed about 330,000 men during World War II. They estimate that up to 2,000 naval ships, several thousand varied landing craft, and about 10,000 aircraft participated in amphibious landings.[38]

Naval infantry, at the end of World War II, had become an effective, highly motivated and specialized branch of the Navy. They had made a significant contribution to the defense of the Soviet Union and had acquired valuable experience. However, in the aftermath of World War II, naval infantry units were severely reduced and by the mid-1950's, removed from the navy's structure.

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[38]Stalbo, op. cit., p. 29.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE NAVY

Naval infantry was reduced to an element of the Coastal Defense Service by 1947, and by the mid-1950's the force was abolished.[1] More than a decade would pass before its reactivation.[2] Historical accounts describing the deactivation of Soviet naval infantry are scant. Soviet writings do not explain the reason for its disappearance. However, in the aftermath of World War II such large numbers of men serving in naval infantry units were not needed. The capability for amphibious operations was retained in a few cadred units which were reinforced by ground forces. Military requirements were focused in other areas and not until the end of the Khrushchev era would the Soviet leadership perceive a need for naval infantry forces. Military and defense related requirements perceived by the Soviet leadership during the post-war years will explain both the demise and eventual resurgence of naval infantry.

The Post-war Stalin Era. The Red Army began to demobilize from its May 1945 posture of eleven million men under arms and in 1946 its name was changed to the Soviet Army. The wartime STAVKA was dissolved and the Military Council and the General Staff resumed their former functions. Military heroes were many; none quite like Stalin who in many ways was a self-made hero. He took the title of Generalissimo, a rank one step above

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[1] Prit ard, op. cit., p. 256.

[2] Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), 24 July 1964, p. 1.

Marshal and one that was uniquely his. In the euphoric aftermath of the World War II victory, Marshals, generals, and admirals were praised, promoted, and popularized. But Stalin quickly put a damper on things and the policy soon became, "Praise for the Generalissimo and back to socialist construction."

Stalin was faced with similar requirements that faced the Bolsheviks in 1917—reconstruction and a peaceful climate to facilitate recovery. The Soviet Union had suffered in excess of twenty million casualties and vast regions of the western and southern portions of the Soviet Union had been laid waste during the war. An estimated twenty-five million people were left homeless. Heavy industry was crippled. As an example, the Soviet Union lost 40 percent of her electric power, 55 percent of her steel production, 60 percent of her mining industry, and 50 percent of the total pre-war railway network. In the agricultural sector, there were similar problems. The countryside had suffered a catastrophic loss of tractors, horses, farm machinery, and cattle herds.

The purpose of the Fourth Five Year Plan, to run from 1946 to 1950, was to make good the whole of the economic damage of the war and raise the output of the economy higher than that of 1940. The Fifth Plan, which ran from 1951 to 1955, projected a continued sharp rise in the indices of production. And indeed, heavy industry underwent a breath-taking rate of growth. This rate of growth received a significant boost through an energetic acquisition and war reparations program. By control of the Soviet zone of ermany, the Soviet Union had 41 percent of Germany's 1943 industrial capacity at her disposal. War reparations were arranged in such a way that as much as 80-90 percent of the production of certain highly specialized industries went directly to the Soviet Union.[3]

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[3]Georg von Rauch, History of Soviet Russia, translated by Peter and Annette Jacobsohn (New York: Praeger, 1947), p. 395.

While the civilian sector was directing its energies to the rebuilding of a war-torn country, the military was directed to proceed on the "Stalin Science of Victory." Stalinist Military Science was based on the "five permanent operating factors:" stability of the rear; morale of the troops; quantity and quality of the divisions; equipment of the force; and organizing talent of the command personnel. These factors were labeled Marxist and supposedly developed by Stalin. The Soviet military looked ahead relying on lessons of the past and the military leaders were unable to protest. The nuclear age was upon the world but Stalin's military forces continued to rely on the Great Patriotic War for their doctrinal direction. Although it remained that way until the Stalin era passed, Stalin hardly neglected requirements of the nuclear age. Military policy was oriented directly toward two primary tasks: the first and most urgent, to break the American nuclear monopoly; the second, to hold Europe intact while the first task was being accomplished.

In public, Stalin derided Western claims that atomic weapons had changed traditional methods of waging war:

> I do not believe the atomic bomb to be a serious force as certain politicians are inclined to regard it. Atomic bombs are intended to intimidate the weak-nerved, but they cannot decide the outcome of war, since atomic bombs are by no means sufficient for the purpose.[4]

In the same way Trotsky had done at Brest-Litovsk in 1918, Stalin attempted to hold off the West with words. Stalin's public denigration of the significance of nuclear weapons was probably a reasonable response to Soviet military weaknesses. At the same time, Soviet scientists and skilled German engineers acquired at the end of the war, worked hard to achieve a nuclear capability. On 29 August 1949 the Soviet Union exploded

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[4]Malcolm Mackintosh, _ernaut: History of the Soviet Armed Forces (New York: Macmillian, 1967), p. 278.

her first atomic device. Nearly four years later, the Soviet Union exploded her first thermonuclear device.

Although the United States possessed the capability to utilize military power at great distances, Stalin continued to rely on traditional Soviet land forces as the means to insure the security of the "Socialist homeland." As the editors of The Soviet War Machine succinctly and correctly point out.

> The USSR faced the need to deter the US from reacting vigorously to hostile political moves emanating from Moscow and from attempting to exploit political unrest in Eastern Europe; more generally, Stalin saw the need to usher the USSR safely through the period in which it would be vulnerable to Western strategic nuclear strength. His immediate solution was to emphasize, both operationally and in his declaratory policy, the continuing significance of land power, represented by mass armies defending a territorial heartland and operating on interior lines of supply and communication—the traditional Russian form of military . . . Soviet land power became the counterpoise to US strategic strength.[5]

Large ground forces were also required to consolidate the new Soviet empire in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union, with her newly acquired system of buffer states, had in effect established a "cordon sanitaire," against the capitalist West. Until Stalin could make substantial progress in the nuclear field, his "main recourse in the military field lay in making the threat of Soviet land power against Europe, the counterpoise to U.S. nuclear power."[6] As a result of the traditional reliance on land forces to insure the security of the Soviet Union, compounded by considerable domestic problems, the Soviet Navy's immediate future was not particularly promising. As had happened during the period following Peter the Great and the Civil War, Soviet decisionmakers perceived their strength

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[5]Ray Bonds (ed.), The Soviet War Machine (Secaucus, N.J.: Chartwell Book, Inc., 1976), p. 202.

[6]Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe, 1945-1970 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 34.

as being derived from a continental base and consequently the importance of the navy declined.

Naval strategy following the war was primarily defensive. The navy's role was limited to supporting the Soviet Army. As Admiral Gorshkov pointed out in 1963, the Navy in World War II "consolidated its role as only the helper of the land forces."[7] This concept of "helper" continued in the post-war period.

Rear Admiral Belli, in an article analyzing the coordination of the navy and the army, stated that, "History repeatedly shows that the goals of war in the majority of instances are accomplished by the battle of land troops, and activities on the sea carry chiefly a safeguarding character."[8]

Soviet naval development, as during the formative period of the Soviet Union, was dependent on the economic development of the state. The best the Soviet Navy could hope for was to reconstruct a defensively-oriented fleet which would assist the Soviet Army and delay enemy vessels in the event of invasion and war. Michael McGwire, a former British naval officer and specialist of Soviet naval affairs, summarized the Soviet perception of naval requirements in the following way: "The Soviet Union has been primarily concerned to build herself a fleet with which to defend Russia against attack from the sea."[9]

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[7]Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, "Zabata partii o flote," Morskoi Sbornik, No. 7, July 1963, p. 16. Contained in Hudson, op. cit., p. 77.

[8]Admiral V. Belli, "Vzaimodeistvie flota s sukhoputnymi voiskami," Voennaia Mysl (Military Thought), No. 9, September 1946, p. 38. Contained in Hudson, op. cit., p. 74.

[9]Michael McGwire, "Soviet Naval Policy—Prospects for the Seventies," in M. McGwire, ed., Soviet Naval Developments: Context and Capability (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 491.

In essence, Stalin and his strategists could only wrestle with military theory while they placed their attention on more urgent tasks. Nikita Khrushchev would determine the political utility of military power in the nuclear age and in the process the naval infantry would experience both death and resurrection.

The Khrushchev Period - New Notions About War. For a variety of reasons, the military policy issues with which the Soviet leadership was confronted during Khrushchev's rule proved to be considerably more complex than those of the earlier post-war period. Khrushchev found it necessary to deal not only with the unfinished business of the Stalinist period but also with a host of new problems that arose out of the development of nuclear weapons and the increasingly complex international environment.

Among the broad general problems of the Khrushchev era, perhaps none presented more fundamental perplexities at both doctrinal and operative levels of Soviet policy than that of translating Soviet military policy into effective political power in a nuclear environment where the machinery of power itself had taken on awesome new dimensions of destructiveness. Indeed, there was a doctrinal crisis. Considering that the doctrine of a Marxist-Leninist elite preached the use of force and violence as agents of sociopolitical changes, questions pertaining to the meaning of nuclear weaponry posed some very tough questions. Simultaneously, Khrushchev had to deal with the question of whether the Soviet Union could continue to live in a position of strategic inferiority to its major adversary.

Khrushchev and his cohorts weighed the relative merits of two options: either an essentially deterrent strategic posture or a posture that would insure Soviet superiority in the event deterrence failed and

it became necessary to fight a war. It was here that the doctrinal debate as to whether nuclear weapons had made war politically obsolete ceased to be merely an academic issue and became a practical consideration bearing directly upon policy decisions. The decision was first announced at the XX Congress of the CPSU in February 1956. Khrushchev stated that the advent of nuclear weapons had changed "the old notions about war." He envisioned all wars as being fought in a nuclear environment and concluded that deterrence was the best course.[10]

"Peaceful coexistence" had replaced the strategy of the Stalinist era. This political strategy meant that the Soviet Union would continue to pursue a vigorous policy of expanding influence and power by all means short of nuclear war.

This shift to deterrence necessitated considerable revision of Soviet military doctrine and the restructuring of the Soviet armed forces. The ground forces, which had traditionally enjoyed a position as the dominant force in Soviet military power, gave way to the newly created Strategic Rocket Forces. The Strategic Rocket Forces were to become the Soviet Union's first line of defense. Conventional forces including the surface navy and ground forces were deemphasized because they appeared extremely vulnerable in terms of modern nuclear war.[11] Khrushchev's deemphasis of conventional forces and subsequent reorganization resulted in force reductions as reflected in Chart 3.

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[10]Nikita S. Khrushchev, Report to the 20th CPSU Congress, Pravda, February 15, 1956. As found in F. D. Kohler, et. al., Soviet Strategy for the Seventies, Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, 1973, p. 107.

[11]Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964,, p. 31.

Chart 3

Actual and Planned Troop Reductions within the Soviet Armed Forces, 1955-1964

Thousands of men

Period	Prereduction strength	Size of cut		Postreduction strength	
		Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned
1955-57	5,763	1,840	1,840	3,923	3,923
1958-59	3,923	300	300	3,623	3,623
1960-61*	3,623	600	1,200	3,023	2,423
1963-?**	3,023	0	600	3,023	2,423
Total reduction	...	2,740	3,940	3,023	...

Sources: Michael Garder, A History of the Soviet Army (Praeger, 1966), p. 141; Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe, 1945-1970 (Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 164-166; and Edgar O'Ballance, The Red Army: A Short History (Praeger, 1964), p. 199; contained in Jeffrey Record, Sizing Up the Soviet Army, Brookings Institution, p. 10.

*Berlin Crisis, 1960-61, precluded this cut from being carried out fully.

**The 1963 reduction program, which was never realized, was apparently designed to complete the only partially achieved program of 1960-61.

Khrushchev's reorientation and denigration of the general purpose forces in favor of the nuclear missile forces severely impacted on Soviet naval developments. Khrushchev believed that many of the Soviet Navy's missions, including troop operations ashore, could be transferred to the newly created Strategic Rocket Forces or to the Ground Forces.

In late 1955, Admiral Kuznetsov, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, was dismissed because of his stubborn, traditional view of the need for a strong surface navy. Khrushchev's response to Kuznetsov's shipbuilding request in 1955 typified the leadership's attitude toward the surface navy:

"Let's put off indefinitely the question of building up our navy and concentrate instead on the problem of our Air Force and Missiles. Any future war will be won in the air, not on the sea."[12]

Khrushchev, convinced that large surface ships would be little more than floating targets for enemy missiles, focused naval development on a vigorous submarine program. In Khrushchev's view, "submarines are mobile, underwater missile launching pads, far easier to conceal from the enemy than stationary silos on land."[13] The navy was to be smaller and the submarine would be "the most important element." "Gone were the days when the heavy cruiser and the battleship were the backbone of the navy."[14] Modernization of the Soviet Navy began and Khrushchev's plans were clear:

> We made a decision to convert our navy primarily to submarines. We concentrated on the development of nuclear powered submarines and soon began turning them out virtually on an assembly line.
>
> Thus we fundamentally changed the strategy and composition of our navy. I take full responsibility on my shoulders. I have no desire to conceal that I threw to the side of the younger cadres in the Navy and helped them overcome the resistance of the older officers who couldn't bring themselves to admit that not only was the submarine cheaper to build and operate - it was also a much more formidable and effective weapon.[15]

In adopting this policy, the submarine became the basis of the Soviet Navy throughout the late 1950's and early 1960's. The submarine, in conjunction with strategic bombers and surface-to-surface missiles, served as the Soviet nuclear deterrent.

The role of the Navy's land arm, naval infantry, was also reevaluated in terms of the nuclear realities. Amphibious operations were

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[12]Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, The Last Testament, S. Talbott, ed., (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1974), p. 26.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., p. 31.

considered impossible. The Soviet leadership rationalized that the massing of ships, personnel and weapons would only create lucrative targets for enemy missile systems. Admiral Gorshkov writing in 1967 described the results of the changing direction in naval policy:

> In opposition to the views accepted in the early postwar years defining joint operations with ground troops as one of the Navy's primary missions, views were advanced that completely denied the need for the Navy to cooperate with ground troops in the conduct of combat operations. According to these views, it was considered that ground troops having nuclear weapons would not need support from the sea, since they could overcome any water obstacles in the way of their own forces or even attack an enemy fleet that attempted to strike blows at them from the sea.
>
> It was even considered that amphibious landings had completely lost their importance and that the tasks that they had carried out formerly would be accomplished by airborne assaults or by the armored amphibious personnel carriers of ground troops.[16]

At approximately the same time the construction of amphibious vessels ceased. When questioned concerning the development and construction of transport ships for amphibious operations, Khrushchev responded:

> We are a socialist country, in accordance with Lenin's principle of peaceful coexistence, we are against imperialist wars, and we do not aspire to occupy other countries. Therefore we have no need for those vessels that are used by countries like the United States to pursue aggressive and imperialist goals. We were satisfied to be able to deter the hostile forces in the world by means of our ICBMs. Therefore we decided against the building of troop transports.[17]

In view of Khrushchev's position, it is clear that naval infantry no longer had a role. In the mid-1950's, Soviet naval infantry experienced a totally unpublicized death.

Following the deactivation of the naval infantry, responsibility for the conduct of amphibious operations was transferred to the ground forces.

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[16]Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, "Razvitie Sovetskogo Voenno-morskogo iskusstua" (Development of Soviet Naval Art), Morskoi Sbornik, February 1967, pp. 19-20.

[17]Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 31.

This responsibility remained with the ground forces while the navy's role was restricted to support from the sea and transportation of the ground force elements.

The first confirmed indication that the naval infantry was being reactivated came on the eve of Khrushchev's downfall. An article appearing in Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) on 24 July 1964 revealed that the "elite and versatile force" had been reestablished. The Krasnaya Zvezda article cited that the mission assigned to this force included primary participation in amphibious landings, preparation of beachheads, and tactical reconnaissance in support of amphibious operations.[18]

Although there has been considerable speculation on the reason for the revival of naval infantry, Soviet sources do not provide any concrete answers. However, several explanations appear plausible; the personal intervention of the Commander-in-Chief Admiral Gorshkov, considerable lobbying efforts in support of a more balanced navy, a reexamination of the utility of amphibious operations, a trend on part of Soviet leadership toward projection of Soviet power, and the development of more strategic flexibility.

Admiral Gorshkov's views on combined operations, his analysis of changing naval requirements, and his personal desire for a balanced navy, appear to be instrumental in the naval infantry's reestablishment. Admiral Gorshkov was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy in 1956. As a flotilla commander in World War II, Admiral Gorshkov developed a deep, personal interest in the conduct of amphibious operations. He directed approximately 25 percent of the 114 Soviet amphibious operations during the war. He had experience in small coastal and riverine craft and during

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[18] Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), 24 July 1964, p. 1.

the war had even commanded ground forces in combat. During the war he had come in contact with such key personalities as Brezhnev, Malinovskiy, and Grechko.[19]

Admiral Gorshkov did not agree with the leadership's opinion that the surface navy had lost their utility. He conducted a politically adept and studied campaign to influence party leadership and preserve the surface navy.[20] Gorshkov continually lobbied and campaigned to limit naval reductions. In the late 1950's he was successful in retaining fifteen Sverdlov cruisers and four other cruisers destined for scrap.[21]

Admiral Gorshkov's address delivered on Armed Forces Day in 1960 typifies his campaign and consistent stance for a balanced navy.

> The basic type of armed force, possessing a very great fire power are the rocket forces. But it does not follow from this that the need for other forces has diminished. Victory in contemporary war can be accomplished only through the use of all means of armed battle. The geographic conditions of our nation, washed by many seas and oceans, state particularly that the Navy will henceforth occupy an important place in the system of the Soviet Armed Forces.[22]

Admiral Gorshkov's concern for his surface navy, however, was not an echo of past naval traditionalists. His concern was in response to the new, very real threat posed by the strategic strike capability of the United States. The increased range of aircraft operating from American carriers and the construction and subsequent deployment of the Polaris submarine had permitted the United States to position their strike forces in the Eastern Mediterranean and the South Norwegian Seas. If the Soviet Navy

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[19]Polmar, op. cit., p. 16.

[20]Herrick, op. cit., pp. 68-75.

[21]Ibid., p. 72.

[22]Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, "Sovetskii Flot," February 23, 1960, pp. 1-2. Contained in Hudson, op. cit., p. 137.

was to effectively counter the carrier and the Polaris threat, it would have to move forward, beyond the 200-300 mile fleet defense zones. Commenting on the positioning of U.S. strike forces in February 1963, Admiral Gorshkov concluded that the maritime defense of the Soviet Union would henceforth depend on naval engagements fought far from her shores. Forward deployment was forced upon the Soviet Navy.[23] Admiral Gorshkov's reappraisal of his navy's role indicated:

> In the last war, naval operations took place mainly near the shore and were confined, for the most part to operative and tactical cooperation with the Army. Today, taking into account the intentions of aggressors and the role given to their navies in the plan for a nuclear attack against the Socialist countries, we must be prepared to reply to them with crushing blows on naval and land objectives over the entire area of the world's seas.[24]

The primary task of Soviet naval force forward deployment would be to prevent the launching of nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union. These strategic requirements obviously demanded the "organic restructuring of the fleet and the reorientation of traditional naval policy and operational habits."[25]

While analyzing the requirements of forward deployment, the historical and geographical lessons had not gone unnoticed. The Soviet Navy in World Wars I and II had been locked in their seas. If forward deployment was to be successful, the Soviet Navy needed the capability to seize and control the critical choke points or passages which would permit the navy's exit. It is entirely probable that Admiral Gorshkov was not impressed with

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[23]Michael MccGwire, "Evolution of Soviet Naval Policy," Soviet Naval Policy, Objectives and Constraints (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp. 505-545.

[24]Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), February 5, 1963, as found in G. S. Dragnich, "Soviet Union's Quest for Access to Naval Facilities in Egypt Prior to the June War of 1967," MccGwire, op. cit., pp. 237-277.

[25]Ibid.

the ground forces' capability in conducting amphibious operations and desired to improve this capacity and expand the capabilities of his fleet. His comments defining the missions assigned to the naval infantry are significant:

> . . . expands the navy's combat capabilities, especially in the accomplishment of missions jointly with ground troops in coastal sectors . . . the powerful combat equipment and the naval infantry combined with the great skill of its tank crews, artillerymen, machine-gunners, and other specialists enables them to carry out complex combat missions both independently as well as in cooperation with ground and airborne troops.[26]

Admiral Gorshkov had never accepted the opinion that amphibious operations, under nuclear conditions, were impossible. He strongly disagreed with those who believed that if amphibious operations were possible, they could be conducted without a supporting naval arm or a specifically trained force.

Other notable naval professionals lent their support to Gorshkov's arguments for a stronger, more balanced fleet. Admiral Alafuzov, writing in response to Marshal Sokolovskiy's first edition of Military Strategy, argued that a properly constructed fleet was necessary in future wars and that history had adequately demonstrated that a surface navy had provided invaluable aid in assuring victory in past wars. He emphasized that naval landings were more important than air landings and took issue with the idea that landings could be conducted by ordinary land troops without a creditable navy. Admiral Alafuzov supported the position that naval infantry would be useful in attacks by the sea and derided Marshal Sokolovskiy

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[26] Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), 24 July 1964, p. 1.

for not even recognizing this in his book.[27]

Other officers also took exception to the excessive submarinization of the navy and the effect that the nuclear revolution had on the role and composition of the navy. An article in Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest) in April 1963 reflected the view that nuclear weapons, surface vessels, naval infantry, and aviation, all play a role at one time or another during armed conflict, and that the composition of the navy should include all elements.[28] Another article appearing in Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest) in September 1963 argued that amphibious operations were important because they provided for the seizure of critical ports, islands, straits, and naval bases. Additionally, because of their speed and mobility, amphibious forces could avoid nuclear strikes and would be useful in penetrating the loose coastal defenses found in nuclear war.[29]

Rear Admiral D. A. Tuz championed the cause for the return of naval infantry. He stated that naval infantry would be capable of the

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[27]V. A. Alavuzov, "Koykhodu v svet truda Voennai Strategiia," Morskoi Sbornik, Vol. 46, No. 1, January 1963, p. 94. It should be pointed out that Marshal of the Soviet Union Vasilli D. Sokolovskiy's Soviet Military Strategy is considered by most Western analysts of Soviet military affairs as one of the most important works available to Western students on Soviet military thought. It was the first comprehensive work on Soviet strategic thought since 1926. Three editions of this work have been published. The first edition appeared in Soviet bookstores in the summer of 1962. The second edition was sent to the Soviet military publishing house in August 1963. The third edition was printed in November 1967 and appeared in Soviet bookstores in March 1968. Through an analysis of changes from one edition to the next, it is possible for the Western analyst to uncover changes in Soviet thought, to understand changes in outlook, and the like.

[28]L. A. Emel'ianov, "K Voprosee o tattike flota e predmete ee isstedovaniia," Morskoi Sbornik, Vol. 46, No. 4, April 1963, pp. 27-28. Contained in Hudson, op. cit., p. 130.

[29]Captain First Rank N. P. V'iunenko, "Sovremenny desanty" (Modern Sea Landings), Morskoi Sbornik, September 1963, pp. 21-28. Machine translation provided by Naval War College.

kind of quick battle reflexes necessary for modern nuclear war. Using historical experiences to defend the conduct of amphibious operations in modern war, Admiral Tuz stated that naval infantry landings were more effective than air landings. He then described the role of naval infantry in a typical dialectic fashion:

> The appearance of every new type of weapon or kind of force does not call for the disappearance of the existing methods of conducting battle activity up to that time, but the necessity for changing them, for perfecting them in conformity with new conditions.[30]

Another explanation for the reactivation of the naval infantry may be that the Soviet Union desired to improve the mobility of her traditional continental military power. Toward the end of Khrushchev's regime, the Soviet leadership:

> . . . recognized that there was a need for more mobile and versatile forces, either for asserting a Soviet presence in distant areas of political contention or for possible use in local conflict situations in which it might not be expedient to invoke the thrust of immediate nuclear holocaust.[31]

The movement toward a more versatile and flexible military posture was compatible with the Soviet Union's commitment to the Third World. The beginnings of decolonialization presented new prospects for the advancement of Soviet influence and power. Soviet strategy quite obviously supported and favored the process. Marshall Sokolovskiy stated that, "colonies are freed by stubborn conflict, including armed conflict . . . The CPSU has an international duty to aid countries . . . in winning and strengthening

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[30]Rear Admiral D. A. Tuz, "The Role of Amphibious Operations in Nuclear Rocket Warfare," Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), Vol. 47, No. 6, June 1964, p. 26.

[31]Thomas W. Wolfe, "The Projection of Soviet Power," Military Review, February 1969, p. 64.

their national independence, all peoples fighting for the complete destruction of the colonial system."[32] The Soviet Union would support wars of national liberation.

As early as the mid-1950's, Khrushchev recognized that the collapse of the colonial system provided an opportune avenue for splitting the underdeveloped areas from the West. Khrushchev advocated that the emerging underdeveloped countries would have the help of the "Socialist World System." The USSR would furnish the requisite economic and sometimes military assistance to select national liberation movements and to certain newly independent countries. Mobility was required.

Expansion of strategic and military mobility depended upon the capability to provide logistical supply beyond the typical confines of the Eurasian landmass. To directly or indirectly support wars of national liberation, a strong merchant fleet and accompanying naval fleet was crucial. Submarines were obviously inappropriate to provide defense for the rapidly expanding merchant fleet. As Soviet strategy moved toward increased flexibility, the Soviet Navy would have to play a more important role. Surface naval shipbuilding increased as did merchant ship construction. In fact, as the Cuban missile crisis revealed, merchant ships were built for military as well as commercial purposes.[33]

The accelerated development of the merchant fleet was not the only evidence that the Soviet Union was moving toward greater strategic mobility. The development of long-range logistic supply aircraft (AN-22), construction

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[32] V. D. Sokolovskiy, "Voyennaya Strategiya," Soviet Military Strategy, H. F. Scott, ed. (New York: Crane, Russak and Co., 1968), p. 183.

[33] Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Quest for More Globally Mobile Military Power, RAND Memorandum RM 5554 (Santa Monica, Calif.; December 1967), p. 7.

of missile armed surface ships and amphibious landing ships, and the reactivation of the naval infantry, attested to the desire to achieve greater global mobility.[34]

Gorshkov's efforts toward a more balanced force, combined with the leadership's desires for more mobility or "reach," received additional credibility as a result of the Soviet Union's inability to react to international crises. The Suez incident in 1956, Lebanon in 1958, and the Cuban missile crisis demonstrated the inflexibility of Khrushchev's fixed nuclear deterrent strategy. Total reliance on nuclear weaponry severely limited Soviet options in crisis situations or confrontations. The activation of naval infantry combined with the upgrading of Soviet airborne forces indicated a desire on the part of the Soviet leadership to develop an intervention capability. Events of the 1950's and early 1960's demonstrated that war fighting options, distinctly separate from nuclear weaponry, were necessary in the conduct of international politics.[35]

Although the reasons cited are speculative, sufficient evidence exists which indicates that the reactivation of the naval infantry was prompted by a combination of the factors cited.

By 1963 Admiral Gorshkov's efforts toward enhancing the status of the Soviet Navy as well as revising the role it was to play in future wars and in Soviet foreign policy was apparently accepted by the Soviet leadership. By August 1963 Marshal Sokolovskiy viewed the mission of the Soviet Navy as, ". . . keep such important tasks as combating the enemy's naval forces on the sea and at bases, and also disrupting his ocean and sea

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[34]Ibid., p. 5.

[35]Major John F. Meehan III, "The Soviet Marine Corps," Military Review, October 1972, pp. 84- 5.

transport."[36] The importance of naval infantry and amphibious operations was recognized in Marshal Sokolovskiy's third edition when he stated, "Account must also be taken, in the development and organization of the Navy, of the problem of assuring joint operations with ground forces and, primarily, the mission of bringing ashore amphibious landing forces."[37]

Admiral Gorshkov had succeeded in turning naval developments around. It was not to be a coastal defense and submarine fleet. By 1963 Admiral Gorshkov proudly assessed his navy in the following way:

> The Communist Party and the Soviet government are displaying wise foresight, taking all measures to ensure the armament and organization of our fleet correspond to its growing role in the defense of the country, and in the protection of its state interests.[38]

The Brezhnev Era - Maturation of the Soviet Navy. By the end of the Khrushchev period, the Soviet Union had commenced to break out of her continental shell and began to assert influence and interests worldwide. However, Khrushchev never succeeded in fully reshaping Soviet military power to support a political strategy of global dimensions. The succeeding regime saw this as one of their basic tasks. General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and the remaining Soviet political elite have made a definite effort to broaden their military capabilities and increase their military options. As Brezhnev surveyed the world around him after achieving power in 1964, he could not have been particularly pleased. As Thomas W. Wolfe points out, the new leadership "by no means (was) pleased to have inherited a situation in which for two decades the United States not only

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[36] Sokolovskiy, op. cit., p. 254.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Lieutenant Commander David R. Cox, "Sea Power and Soviet Foreign Policy," Naval Institute Proceedings, June 1969, p. 36.

enjoyed strategic superiority over the Soviet Union but also went virtually unchallenged in its capacity to intervene locally in contested trouble spots around the globe."[39]

The desire to extend the reach and enhance the flexibility of Soviet military power on a global basis resulted in a substantial upgrading of the Soviet Navy.

Since 1964 both the geographical scope and the intensity of Soviet naval presence have dramatically increased and the Soviets have made active use of their deployed naval forces; not only in the forward defense of their homeland but also in the protection and promotion of their overseas interests as well. "Within the armed forces of a country, navies fulfill an important role as one of the instruments of state policy in peacetime and are a powerful means of achieving the political goals of an armed struggle in wartime."[40]

Although forward deployment presented significant problems initially, the Soviet Navy appears able to cope while capitalizing on the additional dividends that a forward deployed posture has presented. In 1964 Soviet fleet responsibilities encompassed the protection of fleet areas, the expanded merchant fleet, fishing fleet, and oceanic research ships. By 1967 this responsibility clearly extended to the protection of Soviet interests ashore. Since then, the Soviet Navy has been used in various ways for political and diplomatic purposes.

The following table provides a sample of politically-oriented operations undertaken by the Soviet Navy in recent years.

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[39]Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe, p. 427.

[40]Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, Navies in War and in Peace, p. 134.

Table 1

Examples of Politically-oriented
Soviet Naval Operations: 1967-1975

Jun 67	- "Shadowing" of US Sixth Fleet carriers during Third Arab-Israeli War
Oct 67	- Maintenance of continuous combatant presence in Port Said to deter Israeli strikes against Egypt
Feb-Mar 69	- Deployment of task group into Gulf of Guinea to effect release of Soviet fishing vessels impounded by Ghana
Sep-Oct 70	- Concentration of countervailing forces in extreme Eastern Mediterranean to deter potential US intervention in Jordanian crisis
Dec 70	- Maintenance of continuous combatant presence in or near Conakry to deter attacks on Republic of Guinea from Portuguese Guinea
Dec 71-Jan 72	- Deployment of countervailing forces to Indian Ocean to deter potential US intervention in Indo-Pakistani War
Apr 72	- Deployment of minesweeping and salvage forces to Bangladesh for port-clearing operations
Apr-May 72	- Rendezvous of a submarine tender and ballistic missile submarine in Cuban territorial waters
May 72	- Deployment of countervailing forces to South China Sea in response to US interdiction of sea lines of communication to North Vietnam (Operation LINEBACKER)
Apr 73	- Visits of Admiral Gorshkov and naval task group to Iraq during border conflict with Kuwait
Apr-Jul 73	- Sealift of Moroccan expeditionary force to Syria
Oct-Nov 73	- Concentration of countervailing forces in Eastern Mediterranean to deter potential US intervention (or support potential Soviet intervention) in Fourth Arab-Israeli War
Mar 75	- Soviet support intervention in Angola

Sources: Robert G. Weinland, Soviet Naval Operations--Ten Years of Change, Professional Paper No. 125, and The Changing Mission of the Soviet Navy, Professional Paper No. 80, Center for Naval Analyses, Arlington, Virginia, dated August 1974 and November 1971 respectively.

The Soviet Navy has clearly been used to assist in the solution of political and political-military problems. Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean has been used to constrain the United States in the Middle East crises. Admiral Gorshkov clearly admits that this is one of the primary tasks of the Soviet Navy.

> Ships of the Soviet Navy are systematically present in the ocean, including areas of the presence of shock navies of NATO. The presence of our ships in these areas binds the hands of the imperialists, deprives them of a possibility to interfere unhindered in internal affairs of the peoples.[41]

Admiral Gorshkov and other Soviet leaders are quick to boast about the success that this interposition role has brought the Soviet Union.

> Due to the presence in seas and oceans of the Soviet Navy, Healey, the former English minister of war, was forces to admit that "as a result of the presence of Soviet Naval forces, the countries of the West will not easily decide to intervene as they did at the time of the Lebanese Crisis in 1958." Yes, the situation has changed, and not to the advantage of the imperialists. They are now forced to seriously take into account the presence of Soviet ships in the Mediterranean.[42]

The Soviet Union has also used the navy in typical acts of "gunboat diplomacy;" the use of naval force to coerce another nation. During February-March 1969, the Soviet Union applied diplomatic and naval force pressure on Ghana to expedite the release of two Soviet fishing vessels impounded some four months earlier.

The Soviet Union has used her navy in support of client states. In December 1970, the Soviet Navy commenced a continuous combatant presence near Conakry in an obvious effort to deter attacks on the Republic of Guinea

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[41] Tass, International Service, July 25, 1970, reprinted in FBIS, Daily Report: Soviet Union (27 July 1971), p. E-1. As found in B. M. Blechman, Changing Soviet Navy, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1973.

[42] Gorshkov in Pravda, July 30, 1972, reprinted in FBIS, Daily Report: Soviet Union (August 1, 1972), p. M-7. Contained in Blechman, op. cit., p. 23.

from Portuguese Guinea. Port calls were made to Mogadishu, Somali, in the spring of 1970 to demonstrate support for the incumbent regime threatened by internal disorder.[43] The sealift of Moroccan troops to Syria in 1973 prior to the Middle East conflict was another example of such support.

The Soviet Navy has been required to make extensive use of port visits to sustain their forward deployment status. Although port visits serve a variety of economic, psychological, and purely operational ends, they may serve purely political purposes as well. Such was the case in May 1971, when a so-called "business call" by a Soviet "Kashin" destroyer, was used to assist in legitimizing the new, shaky republic of Sierra Leone. What was announced to the outside world as a routine port call or business call was portrayed as an "official visit" to the people of Sierra Leone. With all the customary exchanges and protocol, the Soviet Navy visibly demonstrated official recognition and solidarity for the new republic.[44]

Traditionally, the Soviet Union did not rely on her navy for the external projection of power. Recently however the Soviet Union is relying more and more on her navy for such projection as the reactivation of naval infantry, the deployment of the Kiev class carrier, and the construction of ocean-going landing ships clearly indicate.

Since the mid-1960's, the Soviet Navy has been used not only to protect state interests, but have also been actively involved in promoting these interests. Those activities appear to be consistent with the current foreign policy objectives of the Soviet leadership. This is particularly evident in the Third World.

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[43] Robert G. Weinland, Soviet Naval Operations - Ten Years of Change, Professional Paper No. 125, Center for Naval Analyses, Arlington, Virginia, 1974, pp. 7-13.

[44] Ibid.

As the Soviet Navy has matured in the past fifteen years, it has taken on more and more missions. These missions include strategic offense, strategic defense, sea denial, seaborne projection, and promotion of state interest (political). Although the first three missions may not directly involve naval infantry, seaborne projection and the promotion of state interests may have a place in the future of the 14,500-man naval infantry force. As V. M. Kulish points out in his Military Force and International Relations:

> In connection with the task of preventing local wars and also in those cases wherein military support must be furnished to those nations fighting for their freedom and independence against the forces of internal reaction and imperialist intervention, the Soviet Union may require mobile and well trained and well equipped armed forces.[45]

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[45] V. M. Kulish, ed., Voyennaya Sila i Mezhdunarodnyye Otnosheniya (Military Force and International Relations), Moscow, 1972. Translated in JPRS: 58947, 8 May 1973.

CHAPTER V

SOVIET "SOLDIERS OF THE SEA"

> A small bay. Cliffs drop to the water's edge. An occasional prickly bush and sun-scorched grass cover the small beach. It is rutted with craters from aircraft bomb explosions, lashed by trenches, and covered with piles of large rocks. In the background are armored personnel carriers. From a helicopter, they resemble huge turtles sheltered from the midday heat. Alongside the combat vehicles stand tanned men in black fatigues. The open collars of the jackets reveal white and blue striped shirts. They are Marines.[1]

Izvestiva's commentary is rather typical of the press coverage extolling the prowess of contemporary Soviet naval infantry. Who are these Soviet "Soldiers of the Sea?" What are their capabilities and limitations in peace and war? What roles can they be expected to perform in view of the rapidly expanding Soviet Navy? This chapter will address itself to answering these questions.

At the outset, it should be recognized that the real capability of Soviet naval infantry is difficult to assess. Some data concerning their organization, equipment, and training are incomplete. Some facets of their operational capabilities are unknown. The nature of the closed Soviet society, strict governmental censorship, and the unusual secrecy surrounding Soviet military affairs are factors which limit the available information. Although the Soviets have given their naval infantry significant press coverage, the military leadership still remains particularly

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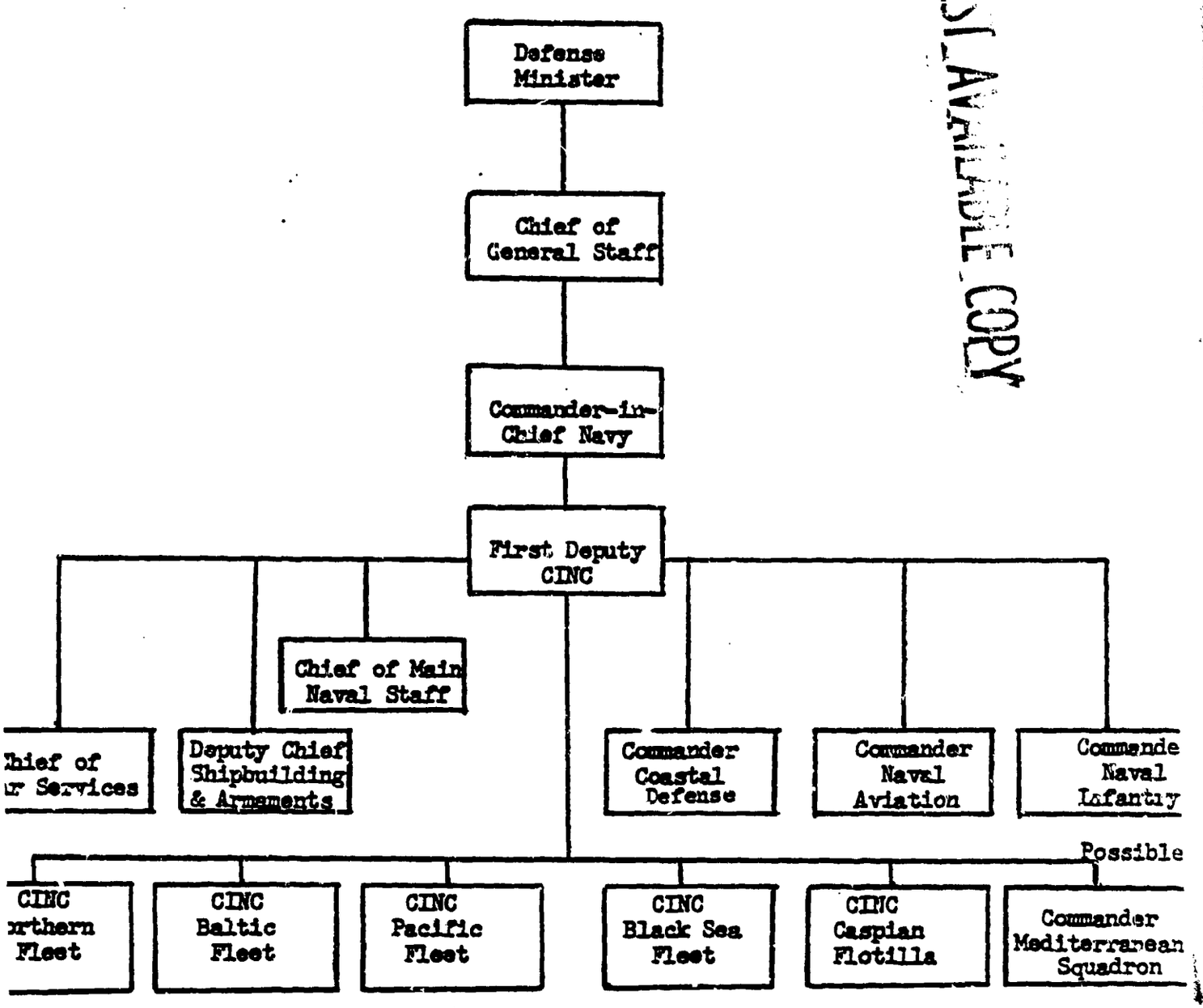
[1] Izvestiva (Moscow), June 17, 1971, p. 8. Contained in Marine Corps Gazette, September 1971, p. 43.

guarded in their statements about the naval infantry's present and future role.

Organization. The Soviet naval organization is generally divided into two categories; the centralized command and staff, with the fleet commands and their supporting arms and services.

Chart 4

Soviet Naval Command Structure



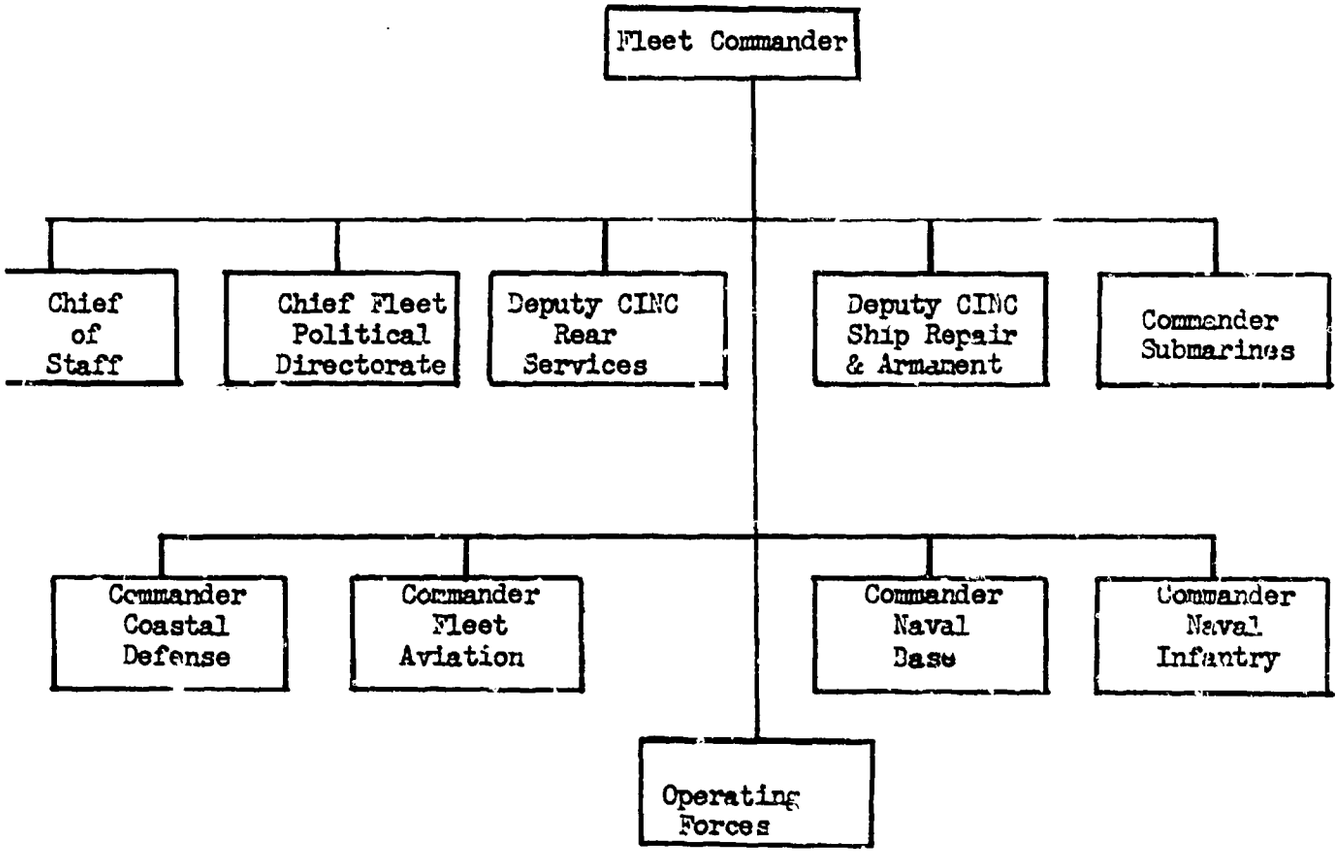
Source: Understanding Soviet Naval [illegible]

The Commander-in-Chief is directly subordinate to the Minister of Defense through the Chief of the General Staff. As depicted, Naval Infantry Forces, Naval Air Forces, and Coastal Defense are integral components of the Soviet Navy. As a branch with command representation on the main naval staff, the commander of naval infantry reports to the Commander-in-Chief along normal organizational lines. Naval infantry forces are organized along the lines of Soviet ground forces and as such carry army grade titles. The commander of naval infantry is believed to be a major general.[2]

Although each fleet has individual organizational peculiarities, the four Soviet fleet commands are generally organized as indicated below:

Chart 5

Typical Fleet Organization



Source: Understanding Soviet Naval Developments, Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C., 1975.

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[2]John Erickson, "Soviet Naval High Command," Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1973, pp. 72-74.

Each fleet is commanded by a four-star admiral. His staff organization generally parallels that of the main naval staff. The staff directorates include personnel, logistics, intelligence, training, medical service, and communications.[3] The four fleet commands are equivalent to Soviet military districts. The fleet commander has operational control of all the military forces in his area except those forces directly under the Ministry of Defense (Strategic Rocket Force, Airborne, and Air Defense Force).[4] The fleet consists of sea-going units, forces ashore, hydrographic and weather services, bases and support facilities, dockyards and training establishments. The component ashore includes naval infantry, naval assault pioneers (frogmen and other inshore underwater specialties), coast defense troops, and rear services.[5]

A naval infantry regiment is assigned to each fleet. The naval infantry of the Northern Fleet is headquartered in Pechenga on the Kola Peninsula.[6] The Baltic Fleet's regiment is located with the Baltic Fleet Headquarters at Baltiysk.[7] The remaining naval infantry regiments are probably located with the Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol and with the Pacific Fleet at Vladivostok. This conclusion is based on the following factors:

** The Baltic and Northern Fleet naval infantry regiments are located near their respective fleet headquarters.

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Kenneth R. Whiting, Development of the Soviet Armed Forces, 1917-1972, Air University Study No. AU-201-72-1PD, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, p. 93.

[5]Erickson, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

[6]John Erickson, "The Northern Theater: Soviet Capabilities and Concepts," Strategic Review, Summer 1976, p. 68.

[7]Statement by Colonel Helmut Zedlick, Federal Republic of Germany, German Liaison Officer, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Personal interview, March 21, 1977.

** The naval infantry commander is under the operational control of the fleet commander. It is anticipated that the naval infantry forces need to be readily available to the fleet command.

** Base facilities necessary to support naval infantry activities are available in the vicinity of each fleet headquarters.

Currently the naval infantry force structure consists of five naval infantry regiments with a total strength of 14,500 men.[8] Soviet journals previously referred to these units as brigades. Since 1967, however, all references have been to regiments. This newer title suggests that a more uniform or perhaps fixed organization exists, probably as a result of the qualitative improvements and accompanying restructuring which has occurred in the last few years. Naval infantry strength grew from approximately 3,000 in 1964 to 12,000 in 1969 and to 17,000 in 1975.[9] Available Western sources indicate that naval infantry strength was reduced to 14,500 in 1976.[10]

A naval infantry regiment is generally organized along the following lines:

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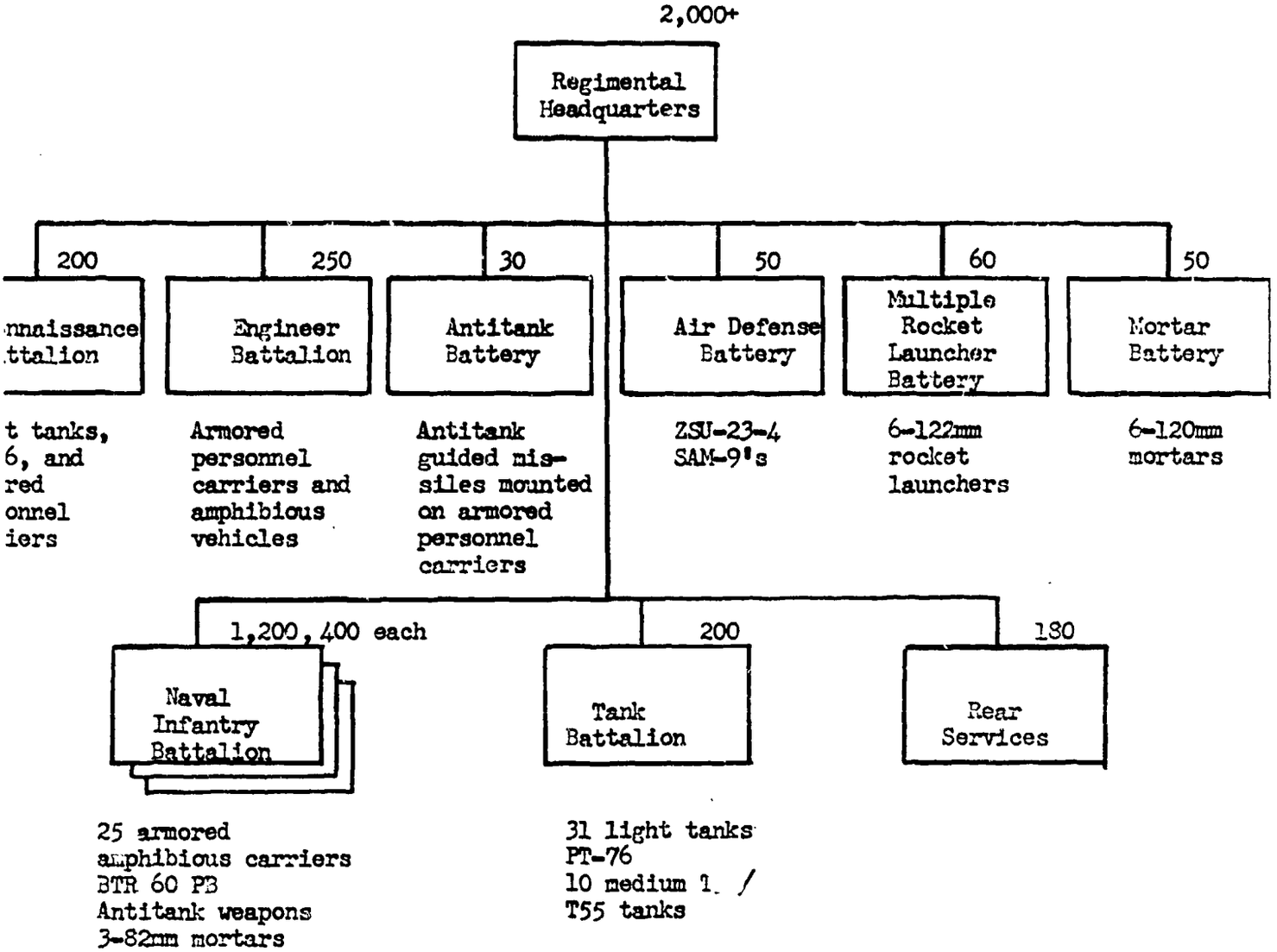
[8] Military Balance, 1976-1977, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, p. 9.

[9] Military Balance, 1964-1965, 1969-1970, 1975-1976, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

[10] Military Balance, 1976-1977.

Chart 6

Naval Infantry Regiment



Source: E. P. Tackle, "Soviet Naval Infantry," RUSI/RMAS Research Center Bulletin, June 1975, p. 2. "Seaborne and Airborne Mobility in Europe," Major General J. L. Moulton, Proceedings, May 1974, pp. 122-143. Statement by Colonel Helmut Zedlick, Federal Republic of Germany, German Liaison Officer, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

A naval infantry regiment's strength is approximately 2,000 men. A naval infantry battalion consisting of approximately 400 men is the basic organization of the regiment. The battalion is organized in a typical triangular fashion. A reinforced naval infantry battalion, when

supplemented with additional units for separate operations, numbers approximately 500 men. Combat support and combat service support are provided by the units depicted in Chart 6. A light tank battalion consisting of 31 PT-76's and ten T54/T55 medium tanks provides the main armored amphibious firepower. An antiarmor capability is furnished by the antitank company, while air defense is provided by the air defense battery. Indirect fire support is available in several units. The naval infantry battalion possesses organic 82mm mortars. Two additional batteries, one equipped with 122mm multiple rocket launchers and another armed with 120mm mortars, provide additional fire support. An engineer battalion, probably designed as the nucleus for an amphibious assault unit, provides engineer support peculiar to amphibious operations. This unit is responsible for mine clearance and obstacle destruction in support of the amphibious assault. A reconnaissance unit of approximately 200 men would be assigned specialized amphibious reconnaissance roles or given the mission to act as a security element for the landing force commander. A light rear service element of approximately 180 personnel provides logistical and maintenance support. More specialized elements such as frogmen and underwater hydrographic specialists are available.[11]

Upon examination certain capabilities and limitations concerning peacetime and wartime employment of this force are apparent. The naval infantry's position within the Soviet naval organization is rather clear.

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[11]"The Soviet Marine Regiment," Soldat und Technik, February 1970, p. 93. Technical translation, US Army Foreign Science and Technology Center, obtained from Defense Documentation Center, AD No. 676437L. E. P. Takle, "Soviet Naval Infantry," RUSI/RMAS Research Centre Bulletin, June 1975, p. 2. Statements by Colonel Helmut Zedlick, Federal Republic of Germany, German Liaison Officer, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Personal interview, March 21, 1977.

They are integral components of each fleet. The naval infantry force is directly subordinate to and under the operational control of the fleet commander. The naval infantry, unlike the Soviet airborne forces, does not enjoy separate status. The airborne forces are directly subordinate to and under the operational control of the Minister of Defense. When employed as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the airborne forces demonstrated their capability to perform independent strategic missions.[12] In contrast, the current position of naval infantry within the Soviet Union's defense establishment indicates that they have neither been assigned nor enjoy a similar independent role.

The assignment of a naval infantry regiment to each fleet commander provides each fleet with a limited amphibious capability. The modest size of this force itself presents serious limitations. The naval infantry regiment possesses neither the combat power nor the support necessary to sustain itself in a major conflict. The strength of a naval infantry regiment approximates that of a U.S. Marine amphibious unit which has a reinforced infantry battalion as the ground component. The size of the total naval infantry force, estimated at 14,500, is approximately 2,000 men less than a U.S. Marine infantry division.

It would be difficult to combine these widely dispersed naval infantry forces during any sort of crisis situation. A great amount of time would be needed, considering the distances involves, and the twin requirements for secrecy and security probably could not be met.

The naval infantry's current size, location, and organizational status indicates that this force exists as a fleet commander's amphibious

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[12]Graham H. Turbiville, "Soviet Airborne Troops," Military Review, April 1973, p. 64.

land arm. Its relatively modest [illegible] indicates that in the event of hostilities it would require considerable reinforcement prior to attempting any large-scale independent operations. Without reinforcement the naval infantry appears limited to conducting small-scale spoiling attacks, limited objective attacks, or World War II-type commando raids. If the naval infantry is not employed as a limited mobile assault force it may very well revert to a fleet self-defense role.

In a peacetime setting naval infantry forces provide the Soviet Government with a valuable political-military instrument. A small detachment of naval infantry embarked aboard amphibious shipping would allow the Soviet Government additional options in conducting international affairs.

That same force deployed to a crisis area could apply political pressure simply by its presence, or it could apply military pressure by intervention or interposition. Much more than just the existence of the force is needed. Its capability to project its military power must be perceived and believed by other nations. It does not have an independent role or mission. It is limited by a lack of amphibious support, and it does not possess a deployable air umbrella. These weaknesses limit the value of the Soviet naval infantry in any real peacetime role.

Equipment. The ability of a unit to accomplish its assigned mission is significantly controlled by the type and amount of equipment it possesses. Naval infantry equipment is similar to that used by other Soviet ground forces, but due to their amphibious character they are lightly armed.

Naval infantry's waterborne and ground tactical mobility is provided by the armored amphibious personnel carrier. Each naval infantry battalion is equipped with an estimated 25 armored personnel carriers

designated the BTR60PB. This boatlike amphibian is powered by a hydrojet engine, has overhead armor, and is equipped with a conical turret housing a coaxial 14.5mm and 7.62mm machine gun.

The Soviet light tank (PT76), normally employed by the reconnaissance elements of the Soviet ground forces, composes the main armored amphibious firepower for naval infantry. A light tank battalion of 31 PT76's usually supports a naval infantry regiment.[13] The PT76 is armed with a 76mm gun and is propelled by twin hydrojet engines. It can attain speeds of 10km per hour in water and 40km per hour on land. Although it was not specifically designed for amphibious operations, its amphibious capabilities have been improved by the addition of bow flaps. This modification has enhanced its swimming ability and provided a more stable platform for firing its main gun while afloat.

Additional heavier armored support is provided by the assignment of 10 medium tanks to each regiment.[14] The medium tank is not a true amphibian, but by using its unique snorkeling device it can move ashore in depths up to 5.5 meters of water.

The naval infantry's mobility is further enhanced by the employment of other armored personnel carriers of the BRDM series. These vehicles are employed as antitank guided missile platforms, chemical-biological-radiological mobile monitoring stations, and command and control vehicles. The latest version, the BRDM 2 with its improved amphibious capabilities and conical turret similar to the BTR60PB, has been observed in recent exercises and is assumed to be the replacement for older BRDMs.

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[13] Solidat Und Technik, p. 93.

[14] Military Balance, 1976-1977, p. 9.

It appears that the naval infantry does not possess tube artillery. Indirect fire support is provided by the 120mm mortar battery and a 122mm rocket launcher battery. Additionally each naval infantry battalion is believed to have three 82mm mortars, probably one with each naval infantry company.[15]

The naval infantryman is equipped with a basic family of individual and crew-served weapons typical of the Soviet ground forces. These include the AKM assault rifle and the RPK and PKS light and heavy machine guns. Antitank armament at the lower echelons consist of the RPG 7, supported by other units armed with the Sagger ATGM mounted on armored vehicles.

Recent qualitative air defense improvements have been particularly impressive. The ZSU 23-4, mounted on a modified PT76 tank chassis, has replaced the aging ZPU-4. This weapon is capable of firing 4,000 rounds a minute to a maximum effective range of 3 kilometers. The air defense umbrella has been further enhanced with the addition of the SAM-9 missile mounted on a BRDM 2.[16]

The more specialized equipment and personnel necessary for the conduct of amphibious operations is provided by the combat support and combat service support elements of the regiment. An amphibious assault support unit would include engineers and sappers. These support forces are responsible for mine clearance, obstacle destruction, beachhead control and performing other beachmaster tasks ashore. Additional specialists such as reconnaissance troops and frogmen are available to assist in hydrographic studies, beach reconnaissance and marking areas to and from the

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[15]Statements by Colonel Helmut Zedlick, Federal Republic of Germany, German Liaison Officer, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Personal interview, March 21, 1977.

[16]Military Balance, 1976-1977, p. 9.

beach.[17]

Naval amphibious shipping and craft are particularly important to the naval infantry since they are the source of the naval infantry's waterborne mobility. The most significant vessel of the Soviet amphibious fleet is the "Alligator." The "Alligator" is similar to the 1179 class landing ship tank of the U.S. Navy. It is a 4,000-ton roll-on/roll-off LST, capable of transporting a tank or infantry battalion complete with its vehicles and equipment. The "Polnocny," built in Poland, is a medium landing ship which displaces approximately 1,200 tons. Unlike the "Alligator" or "Ropucha," it is armed with two 18-barrelled, 140mm rocket launchers. The newest landing ship to enter the Soviet amphibious fleet is the "Ropucha" class LST. This vessel displaces approximately 3,500 tons and is capable of attaining speeds up to 17 knots.[18] The accompanying charts reflect the more important shipping and landing craft currently available in the Soviet amphibious inventory.

Chart 7

USSR Amphibious Ships and Landing Craft

Type	Number	Tonnage Std	Tonnage Max	Length	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Ropucha LST	UNK	3,500	5,000	121 m	17	UNK
Alligator LST	12	4,000	6,000	113 m	15	20-25 vehicles, 500 men
Polnocny LSM	60	900	1,200	75 m	18	8-10 armored vehicles
MP-2	8	600	750	58 m	16	4 tanks, 200 men

(continued)

[17] Tackle, op. cit., p. 2.

[18] Identification tables, German Ministry of Defense, Office of Chief of Staff Armed Forces, December 1976.

Chart 7 (continued)

Type	Number	Tonnage Std	Tonnage Max	Length	Speed	Carrying Capacity
MP-4	15	600	800	56 m	12	4 tanks, 200 men
MP-6	8	1,800	2,000	75 m	14	10 tanks, 200 men
MP-8	5	800	1,200	73 m	15	10 APC, 350 ton
MP-10/SMB-1 LCU	10	200	420	48 m	11	4 APC/tanks
VYDRA	35	300	500	48 m	15	2 APC/tanks
Air Cushion Vehicle	6	27	UNK	20.6 m	58	10-12 tons

Sources: Jane's Fighting Ships, 1976; Military Balance, 1976-77; R. L. Moulton, "Seaborne and Airborne Mobility in Europe," Proceedings, May 1974, pp. 122-143. E. Van Veer, "Soviet Naval Infantry, A Coming Weapon," NATO's Fifteen Nations, Vol. 18, February-March 1973, pp. 82-90.

Chart 8

Amphibious Lift Capability 1972-1976

	Pacific			Baltic			Black Sea			Northern		
	72	74	76	72	74	76	72	74	76	72	74	76
Polnocny	20	15	15	9	20	15	15	20	18	6	10	12
Alligator	3	4	3	2	4	4	2	3	3	(-)	3	2
MP 2, 4, 6, 8, Vydra MP 10	40	55	20	31	50	16	35	40	30	19	25	15
Totals	63	74	38	42	74	35	52	63	51	25	38	29

Sources: E. P. Takle, "Soviet Naval Infantry," RUSI/RMAS Research Centre Bulletin, June 1975. Jane's Fighting Ships, 1976-1977. Identification Tables, German Ministry of Defense, Office of the Chief of Staff Armed Forces, December 1976.

An analysis of naval infantry's equipment indicates that their ability for sustained operations is minimal. Their lack of heavy supporting weapons, most noticeably artillery, indicates additional support would be required if sustained operations were contemplated. Their lack of a large combat service support force severely limits their ability to perform lengthy independent operations. However, as a specialized force designed for quick, mobile, short-range operations these forces appear satisfactorily equipped.

For operations within the contiguous waters of the Soviet Union sufficient assets are available to lift the organic naval infantry regiments plus additional forces. If the amphibious forces and landing craft within each fleet are combined, the maximum single lift capability is estimated to be a division. When considering amphibious lift capabilities beyond their contiguous waters, however, certain definite constraints are apparent.

The Soviet Union has emphasized the amphibious portion of their shipbuilding program in recent years. Much of their amphibious fleet is new but surprisingly limited. Only a few of their amphibious ships possess truly ocean-going ability. The "Ropucha," "Alligator," and "Polnocny" landing ships have been observed during Soviet naval maneuvers and on deployments in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. The majority of their landing craft appear to be designed for short haul, shore-to-shore operations.

Excluding the smaller landing craft which the 1976-1977 Military Balance estimates at 60, a decrease of 30 from the previous year,[19] it is

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[19] Military Balance, 1976-1977, p. 8.

doubtful that the entire amphibious fleet of the Soviet Union exceeds 125,000 tons. This represents a total troop lift capacity of approximately 20,000 to 25,000 men. Only the "Alligator" and the newer class "Ropucha," the larger Soviet amphibious vessels, can accommodate an entire Naval Infantry Battalion. These ships, however, only compare with the LST, the smallest vessel of the U.S. amphibious fleet. This fleet, with its impressive array of 20-knot vessels, displaces in excess of 700,000 tons and is capable of accommodating approximately 130,000 embarked troops. Accordingly, the entire Soviet amphibious fleet represents less than one-fifth of the U.S. amphibious force. It is possible that the Soviet Union could assemble their amphibious ships in one area. However, this represents a sizeable problem of organization and something beyond which naval infantry forces to date have demonstrated.

In the area of naval gunfire support, adequate resources appear available within each fleet area. Several post World War II Sverdlov cruisers have been retained which are armed with 4-inch and 6-inch guns. Additional fire support is available from "Kotlin" and "Skoryi" class destroyers, which have 3-inch and 4-inch guns. The smaller escort vessels, of the "Petya and Riga" class, are armed with 3-inch and 4-inch guns respectively. The more numerous "Polnocny" class landing ship can provide inshore fire support with its 140mm rocket launchers. The Pacific Fleet has the greatest naval gunfire support resources since it possesses four cruisers, 18 destroyers, and 19 destroyer escorts. The Northern Fleet, possessing the smallest numbers of landing ships and craft, is also the most lightly armed. It contains only two cruisers, 13 destroyers, and 20 escorts.[20]

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[20] Jane's Fighting Ships, 1975-1976, p. 591.

When considering short-haul operations in the coastal areas of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union, the coastal artillery batteries and other artillery assets from army ground force units must also be included. These may be available to support amphibious landings.

Air support on the periphery of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact appears adequate for coastal operations. Sufficient land-based frontal aviation and air defense units can provide local air superiority required to support amphibious landings in the contiguous waters.

Training. Naval infantry units are identified as "Guard" units, the honorific title assigned to units with distinguished historical traditions. They are continually portrayed as elite troops, and their training seems to be designed to foster such an image. Colonel Laletin, writing in Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest) provides typical prose:

> Every naval infantryman is required to be courageous, decisive, to display initiative, and daring in combat. Needed as well is a high degree of physical fitness, ability to swim with his personal arms and in uniform, be a good sailor, feel at sea as if he were ashore, and when aboard the amphibious ships as if he were in his own barracks. Naval infantrymen must be able to board amphibious ships quickly and without fuss, to be lightning quick in disembarking, day and night, in rough weather, and to conduct swift actions ashore. These qualities can be developed in naval infantrymen in only one way: by training them in situations which resemble real combat to the fullest extent possible.[21]

Naval infantry training is varied and demanding. The Soviets recognize the difficult tasks required of amphibious assault forces and their training reflects it. Naval infantrymen are required to master a wide variety of specialties. Not only are they to be expert infantrymen, but they are required to fill the roles of tankmen, sappers, divers, and

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[21] A. A. Laletin, "The Modern Naval Infantry," Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), No. 11, 1964, pp. 27-32. Machine translation, provided by Naval War College.

be accomplished reconnaissance personnel.[22]

The individual recruit, presumably a volunteer, is continually harangued with the importance of his personal responsibility toward upholding and strengthening those qualities which are part of the cherished naval infantry tradition. The Soviets describe the naval infantry tradition as one with a high moral spirit, an irresistable offensive impulse, a love of the motherland, and a hatred toward her enemies.[23]

The naval infantryman serves a two-year term. His basic training consists of two phases. The first phase, his initial training, is similar to the training received by motorized rifle units. Emphasis is placed on developing basic infantry skills. This is followed by a naval training phase where the recruit receives instruction in naval terminology, damage control, embarkation and debarkation techniques, and a myriad of related skills. High standards of individual performance are stressed. Strong emphasis is placed on physical fitness, weapons qualification, map reading, and land navigation. Typical training includes all-weather beach assaults, cliff assaults, mountain operations, cross-country skiing, parachute training, and helioborne assaults.[24]

Naval infantry training is quite obviously designed to produce a well-disciplined, amphibious-oriented assault force. The capabilities of the naval infantryman appear to exceed those of the basic infantryman of a motorized rifle unit. He is trained to perform in a variety of conditions and locations. The emphasis on mountain training and cliff assaults

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[22]B. I. Sergeyenko, "The Development of Landing Forces," Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), No. 3, 1971, p. 16. Machine translation, provided by Naval War College.

[23]A. A. Laletin, op. cit., p. 28.

[24]Meehan, op. cit., p. 91.

may indicate possible areas of future employment. One only has to look at the neighboring Scandinavian terrain to find a region where the training could be employed. The training prepares the naval infantryman for a variety of landing operations: airborne, helioborne, and amphibious surface assault.

The training appears to produce a multifaceted specialist somewhat similar to U.S. special forces troops. If this be the case, the capability for exporting advisory assistance obviously exists.

It is unclear what percentage of the naval infantry force is parachute qualified. An obvious requirement exists to have a portion of the force airborne qualified for beach reconnaissance or pre-assault insertion before a helioborne operation. During several training exercises naval infantry units have been observed operating with Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union airborne forces. Naval infantrymen who are parachute qualified can readily serve as liaison personnel or members of shore fire control parties.

Tactical Doctrine. The term "desant" in the Soviet lexicon embodies a very important strategical and tactical concept. A survey of Soviet military writings indicates that the word "desant" has two meanings--one applying to a unit and one to an operation. A "desant" unit is a force specially trained to conduct landing operations on enemy-held territory to prosecute further military operations. A "desant" operation is the actual landing of such forces. The operation includes the preparation, transportation, landing, and subsequent action against the enemy.[25]

The "desant" concept identifies three distinctly different "desant" operations; strategic, operational, and tactical. The strategic "desant"

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[25]Lieutenant Colonel Kolgushkin, "Desantniki," Krasnaya Zvezda, contained in Military Review, April 1959, pp. 81-84.

operation envisions the large-scale employment of one or more divisions against a strategically important objective, such as a key industrial complex, port facility, or governmental center. Control of this operation is retained at Ministry of Defense or Theater level. The operation is characterized as long-term and requires the continued support of the "desant" forces after landing.[26]

The operational "desant" would normally be carried out under the control of the front commander in support of the front's mission. Its usual objectives include the seizure of bridgeheads, crossing sites or airfields. These operations normally involve brigade or division-size forces. The Kerch-Eltigen operation in 1945 provides an accurate illustration of an operational "desant."[27]

Additionally, airborne or naval "desant" units may be employed in smaller-scale operations. "Desant" units of squad or platoon size may be assigned missions such as sabotage, organization of partisans, disruption of enemy's rear area, or be used as an advance detachment of a larger "desant" force.[28]

A tactical "desant," an operation favored most by Soviet militarists, is conducted in support of division-size units. It differs from the strategical operation in that it is targeted at an objective of tactical importance. The operation is part of a larger plan and control is normally retained at division level. While the tactical "desant" is conducted on a smaller scale and in a shorter period of time, the objectives

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[26]Turbiville, op. cit., p. 64.

[27]Rear Admiral K. A. Stalbo, "The Naval Art of the Great Patriotic War," Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), No. 3, 1970, p. 2. Machine translation provided by Naval War College.

[28]Ibid.

are usually similar to the operational "desant." Typical missions would include the seizing of bridgeheads and disrupting the enemy's rear area or his command and control facilities. The primary reason for the tactical "desant" is to provide assistance to the forces in the main battle area.[29]

Soviet writers continually stress the importance of tactical landings in contemporary warfare. Admiral Stalbo, writing in 1970, used historical evidence from World War II to emphasize the importance of the tactical landing. He points out that the rapid and repeated amphibious assaults which were conducted in coordination with the army's land campaign, significantly contributed toward the German defeat in the Baltic coastal area. Admiral Stalbo stresses the importance of these tactical landings:

> It is important to note that the overwhelming majority of amphibious operations by the Soviet Navy were dictated by normal operational-tactical expediency. The amphibious landings aided the achievements of objectives of the operation within which they were carried out, and were an important link with the armed struggle as a whole.[30]

When speaking of the contemporary era, Admiral Stalbo concludes that amphibious landing operations remain important in the contemporary era.[31]

Admiral Tuz also recognized the strategical and tactical value of amphibious landings. "Landings, air and sea, are one of the more active forms of military action, corresponding to the achievement of more decisive

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[29] C. L. Donnelly, "The Soviet Concept of the Desant," Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies, September 1971, pp. 52-55.

[30] Stalbo, op. cit., p. 60.

[31] Ibid., p. 7.

objectives in modern conditions."[32] Soviet literature clearly indicates that "desant" forces will play an important role in any future war.

Soviet doctrine divides a naval "desant" operation into five stages. In sequence they are preparation, sea movement, beach assault and landing, execution of the mission ashore, and withdrawal. These stages are quite similar to contemporary American doctrine. The Soviets also view the assault and the rapid buildup of combat power after the landing particularly crucial.

Although the Soviets are quick to boast that 61 of their 114 landings in the Great Patriotic War were conducted in less than 24 hours, they pay particular attention to the preparation phase in planning today's amphibious operations. They recognize that amphibious operations require thoroughly trained forces, meticulous prior planning, and the cooperation of all elements. Centralized command and coordination of all land, sea and air forces is mandatory.

Admiral Pronichkin, writing in Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), emphasizes the importance of unity of command: "There must be one person in command of the landing forces during all stages of the operation."[33] He stresses that although the amphibious task force (including the assault unit, transport, naval and air support units) may be under the command of a naval officer, it is preferred that the senior land commander be in charge. If, in fact, the task force commander is a naval officer, then ". . . his assistant should be an army man or vice versa."[34]

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[32]Rear Admiral D. A. Tuz, "The Role of Amphibious Operations in Nuclear Rocket Warfare," Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), No. 6, 1964, p. 26. Machine translation provided by Naval War College.

[33]Rear Admiral A. P. Pronichkin, "Problems in Control of Forces During Landing Operations," Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), No. 10, 1964, p. 24. Machine translation provided by Naval War College.

[34]Ibid.

Communications play a vital role in assuring effective coordination, command, and control. The Soviets point out that the successful landing of the Danube flotilla, near the city of Vukovar in December 1941, was facilitated by the careful coordination and organization of communications. Additionally they explain that the reason a portion of the landing force missed its assigned beach in the Kerch-Feodosiya operation (1941) was due to faulty communications.[35]

Soviet military specialists continually use their World War II experiences to test the applicability and validity of their contemporary methods. The experiences of World War II indicated that a special floating command post equipped with the latest communications and automated equipment was required.[36] In the late 1960's a post-World War II Sverdlov cruiser, the "Admiral Senyavin," was converted to a command ship.

The second stage of the amphibious operation involves movement to the objective area. According to Soviet doctrine, secrecy is of the utmost importance. Communications security, dispersed embarkation points, and night movement are some of the techniques used to ensure the all-important element of surprise. Many of the same points that were stressed in World War II are still crucial today. Speed and secrecy are required to ensure surprise. Movement to the objective area is conducted by small groups travelling over various routes to a preestablished rendezvous point or assembly area. If the distance to the objective area is short, transport forces generally conduct their movement at night.

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[35] Captain First Rank, D. S. Sigal, "Communications in Landing Operations," Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), No. 3, 1970, p. 39. Machine translation provided by Naval War College.

[36] Pronichkin, op. cit., p. 13.

The third stage of the amphibious operation encompasses the beach assault and the landing. Soviet doctrine again relies on the World War II experience. Captain First Rank Sigal, writing in Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest), stresses the critical importance of air support:

> Experience in warfare indicates that aviation plays an important role in support of landing operations. It conducts airborne landings, makes strikes against the advanced zone of the enemy's defense against landing, conducts aerial reconnaissance, provides air cover for its own forces and solves many other critical problems.[37]

The Soviets appreciate the danger that a strongly defended beach poses to an amphibious assault force. Although 76 of their amphibious landings in World War II were conducted without beach preparation, their doctrine today recognizes the need for detailed pre-assault operations. Mine clearance, naval gunfire, and air support are used to isolate the objective area. Once the landing is accomplished, radio nets are uncovered. Priority for radio communications is assigned to tactical air and naval gunfire shore parties. Shore fire control parties are embarked with the assault elements and upon landing provide the required fire support. Tactical air requests are generally processed through the aviation element on the floating command post until such time as the command post is established ashore.[38]

Once the beachhead is secured the amphibious operation is over. According to doctrine, the naval infantry forces are withdrawn. The sustained ground battle is assumed by the follow-on ground forces.

Current Soviet amphibious capabilities and the planned employment of naval infantry can be determined by analyzing recent Soviet naval

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[37] Sigal, op. cit., p. 41.

[38] Ibid., p. 8.

exercises. The Soviet maneuvers Sever, held in July 1968; Oder-Neisse in September 1969; Okean in April-May 1970; and Comrade in Arms in October 1970; provide an opportunity to review naval infantry in action. More importantly, an investigation of these exercises provides an opportunity to uncover possible wartime missions.

Exercise Sever in July 1968 involved two amphibious assaults. The first was a southern landing involving the combined amphibious forces of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. East German, Polish, and Soviet naval infantry formed a task force and conducted an amphibious assault which resembled a supposed NATO attack on the northern tier of Europe. In the Northern Fleet area an all-Soviet naval infantry force attempted an amphibious assault on Rybachiy Peninsula in the northwest corner of the USSR. The exercise, conducted close to the Norwegian border and the Soviet Naval Base at Murmansk, included ships and naval infantry of the Baltic Fleet. In both the northern and southern scenarios the assault forces played the part of the aggressors and were eventually destroyed.[39]

Operation Oder-Neisse in September 1969 involved a scenario similar to the Baltic exercise of the previous year. It provided a rather clear picture of the tactical procedures and techniques utilized by the combined amphibious assault forces of the Warsaw Pact. Having lost the element of surprise, a simulated nuclear preparation preceded the assault forces. The landing force, approximately 6,000 troops, consisted of elements of Soviet naval infantry and Polish, and East German amphibious troops. A battalion of Soviet army troops were positioned aboard the amphibious shipping acting as a floating reserve or second echelon force. Following the

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[39]G. H. Turbiville, "Warsaw Pact Amphib Ops in Northern Europe," Marine Corps Gazette, October 1976, p. 25.

nuclear preparation naval infantry frogmen and engineers were inserted by helicopter. Their mission was to destroy beach obstacles and to clear and mark the beach for the arriving assault forces. Simultaneous with the surface assault, a Czechoslovakian airborne unit, transported to the objective area by Soviet aircraft, was inserted some distance inland. The landing force penetrated inland, linked up with the airborne unit, and consolidated the seizure of an airfield which permitted the arrival of the main force.

Exercise Okean in April-May 1970, was one of the largest peacetime naval maneuvers conducted by the Soviet Union. These maneuvers included several amphibious assaults. In the Northern Fleet area at least two battalions of naval infantry from the Baltic Fleet conducted an amphibious assault on the northern portion of Rybachiy Peninsula. The tasks assigned the naval infantry force were familiar ones: conduct an amphibious landing, seize a beachhead, and hold it until the arrival of follow-on ground forces. "Alligator" and "Polnocny" landing ships approached the beach preceded by Soviet minesweepers. Surface vessels and shore-based air support provided the necessary cover. The first group of "Alligators" unloaded a few hundred yards off the beach and launched the initial assault wave of naval infantry. Simultaneously a separate airborne force landed some distance inland. As the naval infantry force pushed inland the airborne force blocked any reinforcement of the beachhead. Once the beachhead was secure, the main force landed and subsequently linked up with the airborne unit.[40]

In the Baltic portion of the Okean maneuvers, a naval infantry assault was conducted on the shore of a Baltic island. The objective area,

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[40]Ibid., pp. 25-26.

in contrast with the conventional preparation of the Rybachiy landing, was neutralized by a simulated nuclear strike. Landing ships approached the beach and discharged their naval infantry forces over widely separated areas. The naval infantry forces with heavy armor and fire support secured the beachhead. Subsequently the follow-up main force troops landed and moved inland to secure the island.[41]

The amphibious landings in exercise Comrade-in-Arms, October 1970, took place along the East German coast. Similar to exercise Oder-Neisse, this exercise involved a combined task force of East German, Polish, and Soviet amphibious forces. The landings which took place on the third day of the maneuvers were conducted along the coastal flank of an advancing ground formation. The operation involves the initial insertion of assault forces by helicopter. These security forces in turn covered the insertions of frogmen and assault engineers. Once the beach was cleared, the task force was landed. When their initial objective, the security of the beachhead was accomplished, the landing force moved inland and seized an airfield. An East German airborne force dropped by Soviet transports linked up with the amphibious force. The task force continued the ground attack, conducted a river-crossing operation, and culminated the exercise by seizing a critical port facility.[42]

Although these amphibious exercises were not on the scale of Western amphibious operations, they revealed that the Soviets have learned their lessons well. Some of their techniques were particularly interesting and instructive. For example, "Osa" and "Komar" guided missile patrol boats

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[41] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

[42] Ibid.

were used for shore preparation and the laying of smoke screens concealed the ship-to-shore movement. These Soviet assaults were characterized by speed and shock effect. The first wave of PT76's and APC's rapidly drove inland, disembarking their troops only when stiff resistance was met.

More importantly, when viewed in context with Soviet doctrine these exercises clearly demonstrated the capabilities of the Soviet Union and their Warsaw Pact allies to conduct combined warfare in their coastal areas.

The primary role of the naval infantry in these operations was to provide initial assault forces for the amphibious landing. These amphibious exercises were all of the short-haul variety. Only the Baltic Fleet naval infantry forces ventured beyond their coastal confines when they participated as the aggressor force in the assaults on Rybachiy Peninsula. The naval infantry demonstrated that they train and are prepared to conduct amphibious assaults in conventional or nuclear settings.

Several of the exercises were also defensively oriented. Exercise Sever, which portrayed the Baltic naval infantry as an aggressor force, possibly represented a NATO assault force. The landing was successfully repulsed. The exercise, conducted shortly after NATO's amphibious maneuver, "Polar Express," prompted Admiral Smirnov, the First Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy to comment: "The exercise "Polar Express," which took place in northern Norway, was of a particularly provocative nature. No one has any doubt that it was directed against the socialist countries."[43]

To what degree Soviet naval infantry forces are involved in coastal defense is unclear. They are training to repulse amphibious attacks and

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[43]Pritchard, op. cit., p. 264.

prepared to be employed on the offensive in the event of land war on the European continent.

Exercise Comrade-in-Arms also demonstrated the naval infantry's ability to conduct river-crossing operations. Naval infantry forces have historically been involved in river-crossing operations. The exploits of the Amur and Danube flotilla in the Great Patriotic War indicate that this was an important role. Today, however, it is doubtful that naval infantry consider this more than an ancillary role. The very maneuverable Soviet motorized rifle divisions appear quite capable of conducting river-crossing operations unassisted by naval infantry. A Soviet motorized rifle division possesses far more amphibious equipment than most counterpart forces in the West and its personnel appear more experienced in such tactics. It does not seem reasonable with this capability inherent in their ground divisions that the Soviet Union would require naval infantry assistance.

What roles might the naval infantry be given in a wartime situation? In the event of hostilities, one only need look at the geography of the Soviet Union and recount Russian and Soviet history to find possible objectives for naval infantry employment. The first objective might be the Turkish Straits which has been a traditional goal since the era of Peter the Great. Historically these straits have handicapped Soviet's desires for access to the open oceans. Today these straits still present severe problems to Soviet strategists. Soviet naval infantry operating in consort with army ground forces might play a vital role as an amphibious spearhead in seizing this critical choke point.

A second objective might be in the Baltic where the Soviets face a similar problem. During World Wars I and II, the Soviet Fleets were bottled up in this inland sea. The amphibious exercises in the Baltic

might well have been the rehearsal of a naval infantry wartime contingency for seizing vital islands to prepare for the seizure of the Danish Straits. As exercise Comrade-in-Arms demonstrated, they might well be used to protect the seaward flank as Warsaw Pact and Soviet ground forces attacked in the Northern German Plain area. Well trained amphibious assault forces may prove quite useful in conducting flanking attacks against NATO forces in northern East Germany, as well as against the Danish coastal areas, and in the Jutland Peninsula. In this scenario, naval infantry forces may even provide the amphibious expertise for subsequent incursions against the southern coast of Norway.

Naval infantry forces might find a third objective in Northern Europe. Naval infantry forces could prove useful in independent as well as combined operations against the NATO region. This northern region is particularly vital. Herein lies over half of the Soviet Union's nuclear ballistic missile submarines and the valuable icefree port of Murmansk. Soviet naval infantry forces could be utilized to seize objectives along the Norwegian coast. The difficult terrain in the northern region, particularly the mountains in northern Norway, quite obviously do not favor large-scale mechanized operations. The naval and airborne "desant" assumes greater importance. The Soviets favor the combined "desant" because it "permits the positive aspects of both kinds of operation to be exploited to the fullest."[44]

Projection. The Soviet Union has emphasized the amphibious portion of her shipbuilding program in recent years. However, Western concern was particularly heightened during the 1973 Mideast crisis. In the process of

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[44]Tuz, op. cit., p. 25.

reinforcing her Mediterranean "Eskadra," several amphibious ships with embarked naval infantry joined the task force. On 25 October just prior to the acceptance of the cease fire resolution, several Soviet combat ships were observed steaming in a southeasterly direction from their anchorages near Crete. This task force consisted of six to nine combat vessels and two landing ships. Soviet naval infantry forces were alerted.[45] By noon that day the crisis had subsided and the task force changed course. It is a matter of speculation as to what the actual intention of this alert of Soviet naval infantry was. However, their capability to act as an intervention force and project military power requires additional investigation.[46]

Three factors are crucial to an analysis of Soviet naval infantry's capabilities for overseas force projection. They are air support, naval support, and amphibious lift.

Soviet planners since World War II have appreciated the importance of tactical air power. As part of their "desant" doctrine, they stress that tactical air support is required for the successful prosecution of the "desant" operation. As the Soviet Union moved beyond the territorial confines of the continental land mass, she is severely constrained by her lack of strike carriers. Developments as early as the mid-1960's suggested that she might be attempting to alleviate this shortcoming. The "Moskva" and "Leningrad," designated as anti-submarine cruisers, possess a helicopter-borne assault capability. These ships are capable of carrying 20 to 30 helicopters at speeds of 30 knots. Their extensive antenna arrays suggest

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[45]Michael Getler, "Russians Add Sealift for Tanks and Planes," Washington Post, October 19, 1973.

[46]Quandt, op. cit., p. 33.

that they could be used as a command ship for amphibious operations. Since their deployment in 1968, however, these vessels have been primarily concerned with anti-submarine warfare. Their helicopter complement normally consists of 15 to 20 Hormone helicopters. These helicopters are primarily designed for anti-submarine warfare roles. The "Moskva" has a limited hanger deck and one internal elevator or lift. The width of the elevator appears to severely restrict the size of the helicopters the ship is capable of transporting. While these two vessels possess a helicopter assault capability, they have not as yet been used to transport naval infantry. The amphibious assaults reported in Soviet amphibious exercises have been shore-based.

A more recent concern suggests that the "Kiev," a follow-on to the "Moskva" ASW cruiser, represents a marked change in Soviet carrier strategy. Admirals Moorer and Zumwalt, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Chief of Naval Operations respectively, view the deployment of the "Kiev" as a definite projection-oriented ship. They recognized its deployment as a change in Soviet carrier evolution with direct ties to naval infantry and an intervention role.[47]

Captain First Rank Yu Sokolov, Commanding Officer of the "Kiev" had this to say about his ship:

> This ship is called an antisubmarine cruiser. This means that her most important mission is to seek out and attack an enemy submarine hidden in the depths . . . The ASW cruiser "Kiev" is well armed. She has outstanding seakeeping capabilities . . . jet propelled helicopters and high speed aircraft rise from the deck of the ship . . . the ASW weaponry functions faultlessly. Swift missile . . . look toward the heavens . . . Recently the missilemen of the cruiser accurately hit air and surface targets.[48]

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[47] Washington Post, July 28, 1975.

[48] Pravda (Red Star), 25 July 1976. Contained in Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1977, p. 203.

The "Kiev's" deployment is significant and its true mission and capabilities will remain unknown for some time. The aircraft complement totals approximately 40 aircraft. Half are Hormone ASW helicopters, and the other half "Forger" vertical take-off and landing aircraft. The primary role of the "Forger" has not yet been determined. It could fulfill a variety of roles; air defense, antiship, reconnaissance, or ground support. If the "Forger" was employed in a tactical support role, however, certain obvious limitations exist. U.S. experience with VSTOL aircraft, particularly the "Harrier," indicates that the bomb load and fuel capacity are extremely limited. The "Forger" in comparison has an ever lower weapon load potential and is more limited in maneuver and climb.[49]

In addition to the embarked aircraft, the "Kiev's" large flight deck and external elevators appear to significantly improve its capabilities for helicopter assaults. The most impressive array of armament which includes ASW rocket and missile launchers, anti-air missile launchers, and two twin 76mm dual-purpose gun mounts, also includes two four-tube surface-to-surface missile launchers. Although designated an ASW cruiser, it may well be capable of other missions as well.[50]

It is often mentioned that within the Soviet Union's merchant fleet lies the latent capability to support and sustain overseas force projection. Although this possibility cannot be discounted, it is significant to note that during recent Soviet naval exercises, the participation of merchant marine shipping has been minimal. In fact, when they have been used, as in "Okean 75," their activity was essentially relegated to an actor or

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[49] Inter Avia, "World Review of Aviation," Volume XXXI, September 1976, p. 780.

[50] Captain William H. J. Manthorpe, Jr., "Soviet Navy in 1976," Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1977, pp. 203-204.

aggressor role. Soviet merchant vessels simulated Western shipping reinforcing NATO and allowed the Soviet Fleets an opportunity to practice their role of interdicting the shipping lanes to Europe.[51] If the Soviet Union's merchant fleet was employed to increase the oceanic lift capability, it is obvious that their lift capability would significantly improve. Using their Merchant Marine as auxiliary lift they could probably transport 15 to 20 divisions. However, the planning would be exceedingly difficult and the Soviet Union has indicated neither a desire nor any movement in this direction.

The Soviet Navy, since thrust into forward deployment, is significantly handicapped by its inability to conduct sustained operations at sea for prolonged periods of time. Fleet oilers, replenishment ship construction, as well as developing the operational techniques to provide underway replenishment, has occupied a significant portion of her naval budget and operational training. The transport "Manych," a modern auxiliary ship designed for underway replenishment, and the "Boris Chilkin"-class replenishment oiler, are indicative of the construction effort recently undertaken by the Soviet Union to support the sustained operations of her fleet.[52] It is possible that these ships could be employed to support amphibious operations. In 1973 Admiral Moorer, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, linked these oceangoing replenishment ships to future Soviet amphibious capabilities.[53] However, paralleling the thoughts

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[51]Lieutenant Commanders Bruce W. Watson and Marguerite A. Walton, "Okean-75," Proceedings, July 1976, pp. 93-97.

[52]Rear Admiral Edward Wegener, Federal German Navy, "A Baltic Squadron for NATO," Proceedings, January 1974, p. 281.

[53]Admiral Thomas Moorer, Military Posture Statement, 1973, p. 64.

concerning the merchant fleet to use these vessels would also be an improvisation. It would seriously detract from the Soviet Fleet's ability to sustain her more importantly deployed vessels. Furthermore, the Soviets have not practiced extensive convoy maneuvers. They lack the experience and it does not appear that they will improve in this area in the near future. Presently their amphibious fleet appears specifically designed to provide the surface lift capabilities for short-haul operations within the contiguous seas of the Soviet Union. The capability for transporting amphibious forces over longer distances is restricted by the insufficient size and limited number of truly ocean-going vessels.

Soviet intentions on the employment of naval infantry as an intervention force are unclear. Since the establishment of the naval infantry over a dozen years ago, no examples of direct Soviet intervention have occurred. It is true that the Soviet Navy has used interposition as a political tool in the 1967 and 1973 Mideast crisis. However, it is difficult to envision a situation in which the Soviet Navy could project force if they believed determined opposition would be met. Their capability to intervene would most assuredly require the support of Soviet-based aircraft. The size of the naval infantry, the modest support, and the slight amphibious lift capability clearly suggest that any attempt at intervention would necessarily have to be conducted close to home or minimally in close proximity to friendly regimes.

The increasing global nature of Soviet foreign policy has not been paralleled by the development of Soviet amphibious assault power. Their naval infantry forces remain relatively small. The lack of aircraft carriers clearly indicates that Soviet naval infantry forces are designed for employment within the coastal areas of Soviet homeland and definitely not beyond range of land-based aircraft. Soviet amphibious shipbuilding,

while experimenting with air cushion vehicles and hydrofoils, has not demonstrated a desire to develop a truly ocean-going amphibious fleet to support a transoceanic force projection capability.

CHAPTER VI

THE BALANCE SHEET

Although Soviet naval infantry traces its Russian military heritage to Peter the Great's creation of the "Sea Regiment" in 1705, it actually served only 60 years as an active military arm in support of tsarist military requirements. During the remaining 152 years, naval infantry either lost its role as an amphibious force or it simply did not exist. Admiral Sergei Gorshkov analyzed the meaning of this sporadic record in his important treatise, Navies in Peace and War, and concluded that, "When Russia failed to emphasize development of the fleet and its maintenance at a level necessitated by modern day demands, the country either lost battles in wars or its peacetime policy failed to achieve designated objectives."[1] Conversely, Admiral Gorshkov is quick to point out that when the tsarist leadership pursued an active international policy, naval and naval infantry forces expanded and played an important role in achieving key state objectives.[2] Parenthetically, it is interesting to observe Admiral Gorshkov's careful treatment of perceived modern-day requirements by a discussion of appropriate analogues. At any rate, naval infantry forces were indeed instrumental in providing Peter the Great the means to establish Russia as a Baltic seapower. Similarly, naval forces significantly contributed to Catherine's successful drive to obtain assured access to the Mediterranean Sea. The tasking of naval infantry to expel and subsequent

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[1] Admiral Sergei G. Gorshkov, Navies in War and Peace, p. 36.

[2] Ibid., p. 16.

expulsion of French forces from the Ionian Islands in the late eighteenth century was used by Admiral Gorshkov as a distinctive historical example of how to properly employ naval forces in support of foreign policy.[3]

On the negative side of the ledger, Russian naval infantry lost its importance whenever the tsarist leadership became preoccupied with internal requirements or when they disregarded external pressures or opportunities. During extended periods (1725-1769, 1814-1914) naval infantry did not actively serve the imperial crown. The lack of a trained, properly equipped amphibious force has been described by a number of military historians as a contributory factor in Russian defeats during the Crimean War (1853-1856), Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).[4]

Although the Russian state underwent a series of dramatic changes in 1917, historical continuity continued for naval infantry. The revolutionary Soviet state had no revolutionary plans for amphibious forces. During the nearly 60-year history of the Soviet period, naval infantry has been an active force for only 18 years. In the Soviet view, the absence of a permanent naval infantry force was totally compatible with perceived requirements and attendant resource allocation. As Stalin correctly observed in 1931, the Soviet Union lagged far behind the industrialized Western states. Furthermore, the Soviet Union was a solitary socialist state which viewed all other states as hostile. These perceptions, coupled with the realities of internal unrest, political upheavals, and agricultural chaos, the Soviet leadership had no pressing reason to

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[3]Ibid., p. 18.

[4]Fred T. Jane, Imperial Russian Navy (London: Thackery & Co., 1899), pp. 140-148, 180-201. Donald W. Mitchell, History of Russian and Soviet Seapower (New York: MacMillian Co., 1974), pp. 204-266.

maintain a naval infantry force. Available resources were sorely needed to rapidly develop an industrial base. Although Soviet naval infantry was activated and performed a valid military function during World War II, its presence did not signify the start of a new naval infantry heritage. It simply was required in terms of wartime pressures for specific military tasking and quietly fell into disuse at the end of the war.

But today there is indeed a Soviet naval infantry heritage. That heritage began on 24 July 1964 when Pravda announced the activation of a 3,000-man naval infantry force. The creation of this force was in harmony with the decision to rapidly expand the scope of Soviet naval activities. By the 1960's, there were certain factors which impacted upon the decision to undertake a concerted, expensive, long-term program to expand the capabilities, reach, and influence of the Soviet Navy. Near the end of the Khrushchev period and the beginning of the Brezhnev era, the industrial capacity of the Soviet Union was rapidly approaching that of the West. The Soviet Union was closing the gap in strategic weapons and approaching nuclear parity. The Kremlin leadership recognized that the disintegration of colonialism and the concurrent creation of new Third World states presented new opportunities for Soviet economic and political expansion. Even before the end of the Khrushchev era, the Soviet Union had been thwarted in her efforts to support her new foreign policy interests. The Cuban missile crisis had visibly demonstrated the inflexibility of Khrushchev's fixed nuclear deterrent strategy. Total reliance on nuclear weaponry had limited Soviet options in conducting international politics. The Soviet Union was a great power but handicapped in her efforts to become a superpower.

Soviet naval expansion commencing in the mid-1960's was in response to a conscious decision on the part of the Soviet leadership to break out

of her continental shell and assert her influence on a global basis. No longer would the Soviet Union pursue a continental policy which limited her expansion to areas immediately adjacent to the Soviet periphery. A more favorable correlation of forces emerged and Soviet naval development figured prominently in that correlation. Soviet merchant shipping dramatically increased. Military aid programs expanded to all areas of the world. The Soviet Union became more commercially active and increased her capability to project Soviet military power beyond the Eurasian landmass. Long-range, large, logistic supply aircraft, amphibious shipping, merchant shipping and modern surface combatants were constructed. The activation of Soviet naval infantry was an integral part of the designed naval improvements.

The Soviet Navy has become an integral element of the Soviet Union's political and economic expansion. Admiral Gorshkov concisely describes the responsibilities given to his "new navy" with the following statement: ". . . (They) fulfill an important role as one of the instruments of state policy in peacetime and are a powerful means of achieving the political goals of an armed struggle in wartime."[5]

Wartime Aspects of Soviet Naval Infantry. Today naval infantry units are located with each of the respective Soviet fleets. The majority of these regimental-sized units are positioned in Europe which corresponds to the degree of importance the Soviet Union attributes to this theater of military operations. In the Soviet lexicon a "theater of military operations," is a given extent of territory with its adjacent seaspace or spaces, as well as airspace through which a given element of armed forces of a country as

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[5]Gorshkov, op. cit., p. 134.

a coalition are deployed and utilized to carry out strategic assignment in accord with an overall war plan.[6] The European theater of operation extends from the Kola Peninsula in the north to the Mediterranean Sea in the south. The configuration of this theater of operations and the disposition of forces includes those forces in the Northwest on the Kola Peninsula proper, the Northern Group of Forces in Poland, the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, and the Southern Group of Forces in Hungary. These latter three groups combined with the military forces of East European states comprise the forces of the Warsaw Pact. The Northern Fleet, the Baltic Fleet, and the Black Sea Fleet with their respective naval infantry regiments support the military missions assigned to forces in this theater.

The northern flank of this theater of operations is an area of particular strategic importance to the Soviet Union. In the event of the outbreak of hostilities, the Soviet Union must deny this northern approach to any enemy. This requirement could be accomplished by seizing coastal areas in northern Norway and thus assuring access into the Norwegian Sea. Conversely, this action would prevent the build-up of enemy forces close to the Soviet border.

The current array of forces assigned to the defense of this northern area are under the command of the Leningrad Military District and comprise a standing force of two motorized rifle divisions deployed on the Kola Peninsula. One division is deployed only a short distance from the Norwegian border while a second is deployed to the south along the Finnish border. In addition, a total of three airborne divisions are positioned

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[6]John Erickson, "The Northern Theater: Soviet Capabilities and Concepts," Strategic Review, Summer, 1976, p. 67.

to support operations in this area. Some 300 Soviet aircraft are deployed on the Kola Peninsula and 100 all-weather interceptors are available for air defense. The Soviet Naval Air Force also operates 55 patrol aircraft and approximately 180 other aircraft available for strike and anti-submarine roles.[7]

Naval infantry forces would prove most useful in amphibious assault against the Norwegian coastline. The difficult terrain in this northern region, particularly the mountains of northern Norway, quite obviously do not favor large-scale mechanized operations. Naval and airborne "desant" operations would be particularly suitable in this region.

In the central region of Europe, the 910,000 troops of the Warsaw Pact stand opposite NATO's 635,000 troops. Confronting each other with a massive array of sophisticated equipment, the military balance is difficult to assess. A balance cannot be struck by a mere comparison of manpower, combat units, and equipment. There is no satisfactory way to compare each side's asymmetrical advantages. Secondly, qualitative factors that cannot be reduced to numbers could prove crucial in warfare. Nevertheless, although the overall balance is such as to make military aggression appear unattractive to either side, contingency plans must and do exist. In this regard, any planned central region offensive by the Warsaw Pact must deal with the Baltic flank. It is here where the positioning of the Baltic fleet's naval infantry regiment can support the requirements of flank security. Exercise Comrade-in-Arms in October 1970 demonstrated that naval infantry forces from the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany might well be used to protect the seaward flank of Warsaw Pact forces.

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[7]Ibid., pp. 70-71.

Well trained amphibious assault forces would prove quite useful in conducting operational landings against NATO forces as well as against Danish coastal areas and the Jutland Peninsula. Tactical landings seizing critical crossing points or vital areas, followed by an airborne "desant" and subsequent link-up, would definitely enhance the speed of any Soviet ground offensive in this region.

Security of the southern flank of the European theater of operations appears as a perplexing dilemma for Soviet military strategists. The forward deployment of the Soviet Mediterranean "Eskadra" provides a certain degree of security for this southern flank but it is unclear how long the Black Sea Fleet could maintain its forward defense posture. In view of its limited bases and maintenance facilities in the Mediterranean Sea, it is most likely to retire to the Black Sea area and deny this area to any encroaching hostile force. The positioning of naval infantry with the Black Sea Fleet provides the Soviet naval commander appropriate forces for this contingency.

In the Pacific region, the Soviet Union is faced with a host of difficulties which are as complex but totally unlike those in Europe. Enormous distances separate Pacific seaports from the industrial center. As the headquarters of the Pacific Fleet, Vladivostok is a strategically important city positioned on the southern tip of a peninsula. This peninsula shares a disputed border with the Peoples Republic of China. The dangers to this military and commercially important region are self-evident. In the event of hostilities between the USSR and the PRC, naval infantry forces might be used to conduct raids against Chinese seaports or revert to a purely defensive role protecting the naval base against any offensive originating from adjacent Manchurian bases.

The current assignment of a naval infantry regiment to each of the Baltic, Northern, Pacific and Black Sea Fleets provides each fleet commander the necessary forces to conduct amphibious operations within his coastal areas. Sufficient naval gunfire and air support is available to support short-haul operations. Each fleet possesses the necessary amphibious ships and craft to transport a naval infantry regiment and limited motorized rifle units not to exceed a total force of one division. Since 1964, naval infantry has evolved into a special purpose amphibious force designed specifically for short-haul amphibious operations in a given Soviet theater of operations. As such, naval infantry units exist as an assault unit assigned the task of providing the spearhead or first-wave assault forces in amphibious operations. Its mission will be to operate along the coastal flanks of Soviet and Warsaw Pact ground formations, conducting landings of strategic, operational and tactical importance to the overall operation. In this capacity they will be employed in combined operations with airborne forces and conduct "desant" operations in direct support of armies, fronts and of the theater. However, they will probably not be employed to assist in river-crossing operations as was the case in World War II. Today the highly mobile and maneuverable Soviet motorized rifle divisions appear quite capable of conducting river-crossing operations unassisted by naval infantry. They possess the organic amphibious assets and spend considerable time training in river-crossing techniques. Naval infantry's importance rests on its ability to conduct amphibious assaults. The continued upgrading of its capabilities and the constant exercising of wartime scenarios indicate that naval infantry would be employed to seize vital areas and ensure the protection of the strategic flanks of the Soviet Army.

The Continuing Dilemma of Russian Geography. The positioning of Soviet naval infantry units within each fleet area is totally logical when considered in terms of geography and historical experience. Russia has been primarily a land power and continually frustrated by her geographic configuration which does not permit ready access to the seas. Ever since the days of Peter the Great, Russia has perpetually been plagued by her inability to gain access to the world oceans. Although the Soviet Union has over 20,000 miles of coastline, most of it faces the Arctic and is of no use for maritime commerce. Only the port of Murmansk remains ice-free year-round and even then, ships venturing into the Atlantic must pass through the channels of the Greenland-Iceland-Faroe Islands Gap before entering the Atlantic Ocean. In the Baltic, egress is severely restricted. Ships must pass through Denmark's Skagerrak and Kattegat Straits. Rear Admiral Edward Wegener of the West German Navy vividly portrays the strategic importance of the Baltic to the Soviet Navy in the following passage:

> Here are the big shipyards; here is the home of the major port of the rapidly growing Soviet merchant fleet; here is the center of the Soviet naval armament industry . . . If the submarine fleet is not included, almost 40 percent of the whole Soviet Navy is stationed here. This vast maritime potential is linked with the oceans only by the needle's eye of the Baltic approaches.[8]

Similarly, the only exit from the Black Sea is through the Turkish Straits and the Dardanelles. This only provides access to the Mediterranean. Gibraltar must still be traversed. In the Pacific, Soviet ships homeported in the vicinity of Vladivostok must travel through the Japanese island chain. Their exit must be through one of the narrow straits of Tsushima, Tsugaru, or the La Pérouse Strait.

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[8] Rear Admiral Edward Wegener, "A Strategic Analysis of the Baltic Sea and the Danish Straits," To Use the Sea (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1973), p. 212.

The Soviet Union realizes that seapower can be used effectively to support state policy in regions distant from her shores. She has undertaken a program to ensure access to the world oceans. Geographical constraints must cause deep concern. Choke points must be kept open. Continuing diplomatic, economic, and military measures are used by the Soviet Government to impress upon states which occupy land area adjacent to these choke points that access is a key security requirement. Soviet vessels continually exercise in the Baltic, Norwegian Sea and Mediterranean regions; naval maneuvers are intended to convince any doubters that the Soviet Union has the capability to ensure that all key choke points remain open.

Again the rationale for positioning this 14,500-man naval infantry force becomes clear. They are positioned to ensure continued access to sea lines of communications protecting those choke points critical to Soviet maritime activity and in the event of war, seize those objectives necessary for access to the world's oceans.

Security of Strategic Systems. Positioning of naval infantry regiments also makes good sense when you consider the nature of the Northern and Pacific naval bases. The Soviet Union possesses an estimated 320 submarines which represents the world's largest peacetime submarine force. Since the construction of a limited Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) force in the late 1950's, the Soviet Union has progressively increased her Navy's strategic weapons program. The current Soviet SLBM force consists of approximately 80 submarines. Eighty percent of these strategic weapons are home based with the Northern Fleet. The remaining 20 percent are located with the Pacific Fleet.[9] Albeit that Murmansk is

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[9]Captain John E. Moore, The Soviet Navy Today (Stein and Day, 1976), p. 57.

the only major Soviet port which remains ice-free throughout the year, security remains tenuous. The naval facility is within easy striking distance from Norway, a country allied with a force inimical to the Soviet Union. Access to Murmansk could be drastically restricted by aircraft operating from NATO air bases in Norway. The sea lines of communication are becoming more restrictive as the Soviet Union and Norway begin to construct oil platforms in the oil-rich Barents Sea. Additionally, the Norwegian fjords could provide good coverage for shipping targeted against Northern Fleet based vessels. The commander of the Pacific Fleet faces comparable problems to those of his European counterparts.

Security of these bases is a vital element in the overall strategic weapons program. Naval infantry units have been positioned to protect these strategic weapons.

Soviet Naval Infantry - Global Responsibilities? Since Admiral Gorshkov's "go to sea" order in 1963, the Soviet Navy has assumed global responsibilities. No longer is the Navy limited to activities on the periphery of the Soviet homeland. Today they are actively employed to expand Soviet political, economic, and military influence on a global basis. The Soviet Navy has extended its presence into the Indian Ocean and since 1970 has maintained a permanent naval force off the west coast of Africa. The Soviet Union has used her Navy to enhance the political prestige of the socialist state and Admiral Gorshkov proudly boasts that his navy visits more foreign ports than does the U.S. Navy. During the ten-year period 1954-1964, 64 Soviet naval vessels visited 16 foreign countries. During the three-year period 1971-1973, 955 naval vessels visited 45 foreign countries.[10]

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[10]Kelly, op. cit., p. 89.

During the past ten years, Soviet naval forces have been used more and more as a direct instrument of Soviet foreign policy. In the 1967 Mideast crisis, the Mediterranean "ESKADRA" was reinforced in order to demonstrate unwavering support to client states. In March 1969, they were an instrument of force ensuring the release of Soviet fishing vessels impounded by Ghana. In May 1971 a visit by a Soviet "Kashin" destroyer was used to assist in legitimizing the new, shaky Republic of Sierra Leone. During the 1973 Mideast crisis, they provided much needed replacement equipment and supplies. Approximately 63,000 tons of material was sea-lifted to Arab states. And most recently, they have been used to assist the MPLA forces during the civil war in Angola.

To support the requirements resulting from the extended reach of the Soviet Navy, the Soviet leadership has actively pursued the development of bases and anchorages far from Soviet soil. The Soviet Navy needs staying power and that has been the direction of diplomatic activities along the littoral of the Indian Ocean and other locales. Naval power is an integral element in the Soviet quest for global mobility, influence, and super power status.

However, Soviet naval infantry in its present configuration adds very little to improve or support the Soviet Navy's increased responsibilities. They possess neither the size nor the necessary supporting equipment to be effectively employed in areas beyond the periphery of the Soviet Union. Any attempt to permanently assign an embarked element to a deployed naval squadron would seriously degrade that fleet commander's ability to accomplish his existing missions. For example, if the Soviet Union desired to emulate the existing U.S. practice of assigning a Marine Amphibious Unit to a deployed fleet, they would find the manpower requirements would equate to an entire naval infantry regiment of 2,000 men. The modest size of the

existing naval infantry force neither permits such action, nor are there any indications that the Soviet Union plans such deployments.

The existing lift capabilities of the naval infantry's amphibious fleet is another limitation. Amphibious ships of the "Alligator" and "Polnocny" class are designed for short-haul operations and their relatively slow speed, 15 and 18 knots respectively, severely constraints transoceanic projection. The Soviet Navy also lacks mobile, land-based, fixed-wing aircraft. If a transoceanic amphibious operation were contemplated it would only be possible within range of Soviet land-based aircraft. Additionally, naval infantry lacks the large special amphibious ships such as helicopter transports and attack cargo vessels necessary to sustain a landing force in distant oceans.

At first glance, it would appear that the alerting of naval infantry forces at the time of the Yom Kippur War and subsequent sighting of this embarked naval infantry force in the vicinity of Crete would indicate that naval infantry does have a projection role.[11] However, the force was not used and as of this date can only be considered an anomaly in an otherwise clear pattern. The Soviet naval infantry's ability to act as a mobile, creditable instrument of foreign policy is suspect. Their present structure, size, and equipment precludes their use in a crisis outside the periphery of the Soviet Union.

Projecting developments into the 1980's it is reasonable to forecast that as the global responsibilities of the Soviet Navy increase, Soviet naval leadership will bring increasing pressure on the political leadership to expand the responsibilities of the naval infantry. This prediction is based on predictable factors that face any navy in the process of extending

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[11] Quandt, op. cit., p. 23.

both range and staying power. In this light, as the global reach of the Soviet Navy expands, advanced naval bases will take on added strategic, military, and economic importance. In the last decade, the Soviet Navy has been actively involved in obtaining basing facilities to sustain its out of area deployments. The acquisition of such bases as Berbera, Conakry, Socotra, and Aden has significantly enhanced the Soviet Union's global posture. Although some facilities are modest and consist of meager maintenance facilities and anchorages, others are quite formidable. For example, Berbera, in Somalia, is by Western standards a well-developed advanced naval base. The investment has been significant. The Soviets have constructed a 13,000-foot runway, oil storage facilities with a capacity in excess of 140,000 barrels, a sophisticated communication facility, and a missile storage and maintenance facility of significant dimensions. After visiting Berbera in 1975 Representative Samuel Stratton (D-NY) made the following observation: "When finally completed, the Berbera complex will represent the most comprehensive naval support facility available to the Soviets anywhere outside the Soviet homeland, including Cuba."[12]

The loss of the air and naval base facilities at Alexandria in the aftermath of the 1973 Mideast crisis demonstrates the significance of the loss of an advanced naval facility. As a result of this loss the Soviet military position in the Eastern Mediterranean was and remains severely weakened. The Soviet Union was forced to search for other port facilities to sustain her Mediterranean presence and forward deployment. No adequate replacement facility has yet to be found.

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[12]"That Russian Base in Somalia," U.S. News and World Report, July 21, 1975, pp. 31-32.

The acquisition, maintenance and use of advanced naval bases have brought both successes and failures to the Soviet drive for a truly global navy. The Soviet Navy will undoubtedly experience future gains as well as disappointing losses. Nevertheless, the trend will continue. The Soviet Navy will continue to reach out, search for additional advanced bases, and will continue to be used in support of foreign policy objectives. As the number of advanced bases increases, security requirements will increase and attendant contingency forces will be needed. Yet today, Soviet naval infantry can neither satisfy these growing requirements, nor does there seem to be any movement in this direction. However, it is doubtful that this reality can last for long. When the Soviet leadership decides to involve its naval infantry in the dynamic naval expansion program certain basic changes in the very structure of this force will be required. Initially the size of naval infantry would have to be expanded. Additional regiments would have to be formed so as not to denigrate the capability of existing units to accomplish their present missions. Such an increase would probably not be witnessed in the Northern or Baltic Fleets but rather in the Black Sea or possibly the Pacific Fleet. The assignment of an additional regiment to the Black Sea area would permit the continuous deployment of an embarked naval infantry unit. Such a unit could be placed under the operational control of a deployed naval squadron or task force. Appropriate changes in the command structure could be effected which would allow central control of these deployed forces. In this manner these additional naval infantry forces might come to enjoy a status similar to the Soviet Airborne Forces.

An increase in size would also have to be paralleled by improvements in the naval infantry's capabilities in other areas. The current

Soviet amphibious shipbuilding program produces only two "Alligator" landing ships annually. Additionally, Poland constructs a limited number of smaller "Polnocny" vessels which are purchased by the Soviet Union. To be a creditable maritime projection force the Soviet Union would have to significantly modify its current shipbuilding program in order to produce amphibious ships such as attack cargo ships, transports, and helicopter carriers. More importantly, the Soviet Union would have to construct attack aircraft carriers or ensure sufficient advanced base landing facilities were available for support aircraft. Finally, new supporting doctrine, training programs, and communications links would have to be developed, tested, and implemented. It is fully anticipated that Soviet naval infantry will be tasked to support the Soviet Navy's global reach--but it will not be able to do so until well into the 1980's.

What emerges from this study is that the resurrection of the Soviet naval infantry occurred concomitantly with the changing global strategy of the Soviet Union. The shift from essentially continental interests to those of global proportions resulted in the establishment of a permanent naval infantry force. Since its reactivation, naval infantry has evolved into an "elite," small, mobile, well-trained special purpose force. As such, naval infantry units are predominantly trained as amphibious shock forces. In the event of conflict, naval infantry forces will be employed in consort with other Soviet forces to seize vital areas and ensure the protection of the strategic flanks of the Soviet Army. Additionally, the current positioning of naval infantry units in the Northern and Pacific Fleet areas provides the necessary security for the Soviet Navy's strategic submarine fleet. Naval infantry units are also positioned to ensure the Soviet Navy's continued access to sea lines of communication and protecting those choke points vital to her maritime activity. In the event of confli

naval infantry units will be used to seize those objectives necessary for access to the world's oceans.

This study further concludes that despite the impressive global advances and the rapidly changing nature of the Soviet Navy, naval infantry has not kept pace. Although the naval infantry had undergone qualitative improvements in recent years, her size, equipment, and structure has not kept pace with the rapidly expanding Soviet naval capabilities. The naval infantry force, as currently structured, appears ill-equipped and insufficient in size to assume responsibilities outside the periphery of the Soviet Union. Obvious changes will be required if the Soviet naval infantry is to acquire global responsibilities.

The Soviet Navy has taken to the oceans of the world much in the way Peter the Great had envisioned. However as Soviet global expansion continues to increase, the lack of responsive contingency forces will grow in importance. The requirement will become increasingly more difficult to accept. But based on experience, just as the Cuban missile crisis prodded naval developments, it might take the loss of an advanced Soviet naval base to convince the Soviet leadership that a force similar to the United States Marine Corps is required.

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